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Vol. XXII

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 3

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 22

DECEMBER, 1915

NUMBER 3

Strangers in Pettipaug

By Grace Margaret Callaher

Author of "The Rachel Straight," "In Exile," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

GUESS we're in for a kind o' tejus night. Put another stick in the stove, bub."

"Bub," who was six feet tall and thirty years old, obeyed in silence.

"Awful savin' o' speech, bub is," old John was wont to say, with his twinkle of fun. "Only thing he does save, though," he would add.

Young John Leverage returned to his seat and the steady digestion of the *New Era*, the weekly paper of the county; but old John seemed unable to settle himself in his usual comfort for the evening.

"Wind's kickin' up, too. I bet a cooky Lone Tree tops over to-night. It's been loosenin' its roots more'n a month."

Young John read on absordedly.

"Tom Gage was over to-day askin' if I could lend him a cord o' firewood till he got on his feet 'nough to cut him some. Cold weather ketched him unprepared."

Young John's eyes looked over the edge of the paper questioningly.

"Told him I never borrowed nor lent, an' he'd done well to have laid in his store o' winter plenishin's 'fore cold weather."

Young John's mild eyes continued to question.

"Offered him a cord o' the best, re-tail price, cash down, if he could find the cash; so he's gone on to tap some other neighbor that'll be gump 'nough to trust that shiftless tool."

"Tom Gage's been playin' in hard luck." Young John's voice was curiously soft to come from so big a body. "He got hurt an' his wife's sickly."

"Whiney an' notional, you mean," the other answered, with unperturbed good humor. "I notice she's antic enough to county fairs an' church suppers an' like that."

Young John offered no further defense, but sank back comfortably into his paper. John Leverage—so the village distinguished the nephew and uncle—found himself an apple and sat munching it contentedly.

Young John was nothing for looks, as his neighbors frankly told him—a solid, neutral-colored fellow, with kind eyes and a smile of womanly sweetness. John, for his part, had been named the handsomest lad in the county, and still, past fifty, was a glorious creature of color and fire and power. His crisply curling gray hair, brilliant dark eyes, and flashing smile could charm any woman in Pettipaug.

The room in which the two men sat was a big, homely old kitchen, neat as

wax, redolent of some hot-spiced brew for supper, and humming with warmth. Flowers in pots bloomed on the window ledge, white curtains shielded the window, and a row of blue plates and a silver-luster pitcher on the dresser dashed in a high note of color. The Widow Salt kept house for the two men, and, when her tasks were done, stole away meekly to "the ell part" to knit in solitude.

"I ain't payin' Parmely Salt for her society," John once remarked to his nephew, "but for her riz bread an' Injin puddin'."

"John Leverage's as fair dealin' a man as you'll find between here an' Canady," the widow had registered her judgment, "but so strong-headed you might as well beat again' the side o' Joshua's Rocks."

"Martha Ann Belt's been here concernin' the renewin' o' her note," John began again after a pause; he always consulted his nephew upon his affairs, although he never by any chance took his advice.

Again young John's eyes searched the ruddy, handsome face.

"I pointed out to her," John went on tranquilly, "that the note had been runnin' somethin' over four year, when the time called for was two."

"I don't see how she'll make out to pay it. Since her mother took to her bed, Martha Ann can't go out nursin' any more."

John chuckled grimly. "Let her get Judge Steel or Cap'n Ben Dowell to back another for her. Time they took up their share o' the town burdens; I've borne 'em long 'nough."

His voice was like his nephew's, deep and soft, but with more timbre in it—a wonderful voice, like all John's personality; and no matter how keen the stress of his emotion, it never rose to a higher note.

"You're better situated than the judge and the cap'n joined in one, an'

you ain't got a fam'ly dependent on you." Young John's mild face flushed fiery red at his own presumption.

"That don't touch the justice o' the matter," replied his uncle, with unmoved placidity. "An' I'd like to know if I ain't got a fam'ly settin' right before me!"

Young John gave over, as always. It was no manner of use contending against his uncle—he had known that since he was in tiers. And, besides, his uncle was a kind neighbor and a public-spirited citizen—to worthy people and causes.

At last John seated himself to take his ease, stretched out in the old Boston rocker, coat off, slippers on, feet on the bar of the glowing stove, and the grange magazine open before him.

"I call this pretty snug, eh, sonny?" he remarked genially. "I hope nobody don't get afire or need the doctor till mornin'."

Young John nodded and smiled, and went on with the *New Era*. The fire snapped; the kettle bubbled; the cat purred; little creaking sounds told that buds on the plants were opening in the warmth.

It was indeed snug, and outside the wind sighed and beat the lilac bushes against the window. John felt at peace with all the world, and especially with his own conscience. All his life he had worked hard and lived uprightly, and the reward was that he was "blessed in basket and store" beyond any one in Pettipaug, and held the respect of all men. So he read on in deep contentment.

By and by young John rose to wind the clock, his being the housewifely tasks of locking up and getting the house ready for the night. He halted, his hand on the clock door.

"Some one's a-comin' in the gate."

"Not this hour!"

In answer a knock, loud and decided, thudded at the door, and, before either



The two men stared at her without a word, amazed, not only at her coming, but at her.

man could get to it, it was flung open and a woman walked in.

"Good evenin'," she said breathlessly, yet without any fear. "Will one of you go to the village for the doctor, an' the other come back with me to help?"

The two men stared at her without a word, amazed, not only at her coming, but at her. For in her way she was as glorious as John Leverage was in his—tall, lithe, crowned with hair like gold, and with the grace and dignity of some huntress goddess. For the rest of her, she was dressed in poor, mended garments, and boy's boots showed beneath her short skirt.

"Looks like a kind o' gypsy creature," was John's inner comment.

Aloud he said kindly: "Have a chair an' tell us your trouble."

"I ain't got time to sit." The woman's voice went through him with a ring. "You go for the doctor—you're younger an' quicker," pointing to young John. "And you come 'long with me." She opened the door again in the urge of her need.

No one—much less mere woman—hurried John Leverage against his will.

"Where might you live?" He pushed a chair toward her.

The woman closed the door, seated herself, and began with a kind of stern patience, as if instructing a child:

"Up in the old Amos Bowers' place. I just came this afternoon, an' when we were unpackin' our goods, a box

fell over on Patty's foot an' hurt it bad—maybe broke the bone."

"The Amos Bowers' house ain't fit to keep a cow in," John told her mildly.

"Nobody's there but me an' Patty, an' I got to go right back to her now." She rose with a sweeping grace.

Young John was already in his coat and cap, and was fumbling with the lantern, but John had not stirred.

"I ain't any hand for sickness. My housekeeper, Mis' Parmely Salt's, the one you seek."

"I don't want a nurse—I'll take care o' poor little Patty. I need wood split an' water fetched in an' the fires kept a-goin', an' you're splendid for that." Suddenly she glowed into a smile that softened her whole face exquisitely.

Somehow, in the lure of that smile, John found himself struggling into his greatcoat and out into the bitter night. Young John had taken the lantern. The woman had no light; she stumbled in the rutted road and struck against hidden objects.

"You ketch a-hold o' me. I got eyes like a cat at night." John thrust his arm in under her cape. She was a tall, strong woman, yet beside his vast height and strength she seemed a slender girl.

"Who's this Patty you tell about—your daughter?" He spoke loud against the wind.

"No; friend."

"Niece, you say?"

"She's a friend I made this mornin'."

"What say?" He raised his voice more powerfully.

"She's a young girl I found this mornin' when I was comin' here. She was put upon an' miserable where she lived, so I brought her along with me."

The man stopped in the road with a jerk.

"Never saw her till this mornin'! What kind o' works do you call *that*?"

"Call it anythin' you're a mind to"—

she actually laughed out loud, a sweet and ringing sound—"but come *along*!"

It seemed to John Leverage, deacon in the Congregational church of Pettipaug, first selectman of that township, as mad a prank as her own that he should be going, arm linked in arm, with a strange woman on a pitch-dark night of winter to the tumble-down Bowers' house on the side of the mountain. Many a Pettipaug woman had set her cap at John Leverage, and some were still engaged in that particular form of the feminine art, but he had never so much as "beaued home from church" one of the aspiring ladies. With the Widow Salt to do for him and young John to listen to him, what need had he of a wife?

"Pretty coarse night to be abroad," he told the stranger, as a gust of wind swooped down the mountain upon them.

"Don't talk. It takes time."

He banded no words with her, but he hung his great weight on her arm to hamper her steps; no woman should tell *him* to hurry!

In an instant she had slipped out of his grasp, as fire or water might elude the hands reaching for them.

"I got to hurry." Her voice swept down to him from up the path.

He could let her fly on alone or he could pound up after her; plainly she was not one to wait on his time. His long stride forged him up to her.

"You'll give you an ugly fall on this path. It's rocky." He thrust his arm into hers masterfully.

She neither answered nor slackened speed. His feet kept the rutted path through old use, for it was the road to his wood lot, but hers found it by a kind of instinct. Her slender body, gripped to him by his powerful hold, was vibrant with a life that leaped in her like electric fire. He felt as if he had caught a creature of the wild

—a deer, perhaps—that fled now under his hand.

"High strung, like all womenfolk," he told himself amusedly.

Under a ledge of rock an adventurous farmer had built a small house, the outpost of Pettipaug; had wearied of his battle with the mountain, and abandoned his airy home for a snug one in the village. For years no one had lived in his house, which had sunk to the edge of ruin. From its small, wry-set windows light gleamed now. The woman opened the door, pulled John in after her, and shut it to quickly.

"All right, pettie?" she asked tenderly, and again her voice, soft and deep, lingered strangely in John's ears.

They were in the main room of the house, large, low, lighted by a lamp on a table. The furniture consisted of a stove, a table, a wooden chest, two chairs, a shelf of dishes and pans, and two cots, on one of which lay another woman. John noted these details in his deliberate way, examining all carefully. Each piece of furniture was poor and clumsy, but shining clean. The stove was blacked; the lamp burned with a bright flame; the patchwork quilts on the cots were clear red and white.

"Good housekeeper," his newer judgment.

Then he walked over to the cot where the hurt woman lay. A pinched face, small as his hand, white as the sheet, looked up at him with great, dark, piteous eyes full of a bewildered suffering, like a little trapped wood creature's. The lips were softly curved like a baby's and deeply red; rings of pretty, dusky hair curled around the child's head. Gypsy she might be, but sick and pathetic she certainly was, too. John's heart was touched. He laid a hand gently on her shoulder.

"Kind o' bad hurt you give you?" he asked in his mild voice which gave no clew to his character.

The girl shuddered violently; her glance fled past him in terror.

"It's a neighbor I brought to help take care o' you," the woman told her. "The doctor's a-comin', too, in just a little while an' then you'll be all right, ladybird." She smiled down on the sufferer gayly. Her voice, too, was gay.

John's slow, relentless scrutiny studied her next. No, he had never met a woman like her in Pettipaug. His lore did not include the goddesses of old time, and his ethics would have repudiated them if it had, but it was their ichor that flowed in the veins of this radiant creature, their essence that breathed through her supple body. Her eyes stood the shock of his an instant, dancing bright; then, not in embarrassment, but in indifference, dropped to the bed.

"We need a bucket o' water—the spring's quite a piece down the path—an' I put the last o' the chunks in the stove. There's an ax an' wood in the shed." She smiled at him that wonderful smile, and made a little gesture of pushing him out of the room.

With a queer, schoolboy sense of running errands, John caught up the bucket.

"I'll set the lamp on the edge o' the window. It'll light you down."

As he left, he saw her bending to rearrange the covers on the cot.

He made two trips to the spring, then started for the shed, but a thought kept him hanging on his heel.

"You women had any supper?"

"No."

"Well, see here, you need some. Got any provisions in the house?" Of course she hadn't; gypsies lived on nuts and berries mostly.

"Coffee, milk, sugar, butter, a side o' bacon, flour, beans, corn meal, loaf o' bread, an' a tin o' hard gingerbread, in the woodshed."

John stood dumb in his tracks. Who

would have looked for such competent providing *here?*

"Haden't you better fry you up some bacon, an' brew a pot o' coffee?" It occurred to him that his own supper was several hours behind.

The woman laughed and swung across the room with her long, free step. As he went out, he saw her unhooking the frying pan from a nail.

For half an hour John cut wood with mighty, swashing blows, and carried armfuls in till a mountain of it towered beside the stove. He split a few pieces into kindling, and then sank his big body into a chair, perfectly assured that not another man in Pettipaug could have cut that amount in twice the time.

"Why, you're splendid!" The woman clapped her hands. "You're a giant! I got wood enough for a week. I haven't ever seen a man work like that. I didn't know as one could."

The farmer gaped at her like a fish. What kind of crazy way was that of carrying on? And did she think him a child in short pants to be buttered up with praise?

Apparently she did not think of him at all.

"I got a real tasty supper ready." She smiled gloriously. "Patty, she's had some sips o' coffee an' a bite o' toast, an' now you an' me'll eat."

Again she made her little compelling gesture, wafting him into a seat at the table. There was no cloth nor napkins; the forks were two-tined iron ones, the cups tin; but John had never tasted crisper bacon or lighter bread.

"More coffee?" She held the pot alluringly over his cup.

"Good brew," he told her, as he watched the clear brown stream pour down.

"I always make mighty good coffee."

Again he sat astounded at her extravagances. No emotion, however, kept John Leverage long from his aim.

To-night that was to find out who this stranger might be and what she was doing here in the old Amos Bowers' place.

"I don't know as I can tell just what to call you," he began in his benign, slow voice.

"Might do like an old sea captain I lived neighbor to once used to do to his wife. He'd bawl out right in the middle o' a Sabbath night: 'Woman!'"

John paid this a smile.

"You kin to Amos Bowers, that owns this house?"

"I own it."

"Amos sold it to you, did he? Did he charge you much o' a price?" John was first deacon in the United Congregational church, first selectman, first grand juror of the county, president of the bank, as well as executor of half a dozen wills and guardian to the five Welles sisters; he was accustomed to ask plain questions in a kind way.

The woman shook her head slightly, with an odd, trembling motion he was to learn well as part of her. Suddenly she leaned across the table till her face was close to his.

"You mustn't ask folks questions about their private affairs when they don't want to tell 'em." She said it very soberly, very, simply.

The big man's ruddy, handsome face fired an ugly red; his straight brows met in an iron bar.

"Young woman," he said austere, "it ain't pretty behavior to take favors from a man an' then be saucy to him."

She did not flinch by a quiver of an eyelid.

"Was it favors," she mused, "to feed the hungry an' clothe the naked an' visit the sick an' them in prison? Why, I thought that was just religion!" Her face softened into little dimples of fun. "It ain't pretty to plague you!" remorsefully. "Listen, I didn't buy this farm o' any man in this township; it was

sold last year to a man in—oh, a long way off, an' he *gave* it to me. An' the little girl is named Martha Judson, but folks call her Patty. An' my name is Lee Wheat."

"That ain't a woman's name at all," still formidable. "Are you Miss or Mrs.?"

"I'm Lee Wheat," without insistence. "I haven't got any husband."

John leaned back, baffled; yet she had told him more than he had asked. Then, as he watched her, the smile on her lips, the glow from the fire gleaming in the threads of her gold hair, he relaxed into a curious softness, and volunteered:

"My name's John Leverage. I was born right in the house where I dwell now. I deem about every one in the county knows me."

She showed no signs of being impressed.

"They told me to the house down the road you lived on the next farm, an' your nephew would likely go for the doctor."

Her voice was as impersonal as before, yet he was touched in his pride of citizenship.

"I ain't generally called unneighborly myself." Then anger mocked him that he should have defended where none attacked.

She smiled on him as if he had been a child.

"You've been real kind an' helpful." Now she would acknowledge it.

John was helpless. Neither power nor attributes nor the vast force of masculine superiority itself could reach this smiling, shining-eyed creature.

"Well," he said boyishly, "well," and hated his impotency.

"It's the doctor!"

Her fine ear had caught the creak of wheels in frozen ruts. She flung open the door.

Young John spoke thickly in his muffler:

"Doctor's over to Dark Harbor, an' won't be back till mornin'. You want I should drive down to the junction after the new fellow there? It's seven miles on a rough road."

Lee decided instantly.

"We'll make out ourselves. Come in an' thaw you out. You're nigh froze." She drew him up to the stove and began to help him off with his coat.

"My horses," he remonstrated.

"Your uncle, here, can stable 'em in my barn. It's a good enough buildin', an' he's all warmed up by the heat."

John was already into his coat and cap; he would not seem to wait for this forward woman's suggestions. As he went out, he saw her pouring coffee for his nephew.

"You comfortable now?" Lee smiled at young John over the pan in which she was washing the dishes with swift deftness. Her manner to the younger man was all soft kindness.

Young John nodded.

"Then we'll look at her foot. Don't be scared. I'm a nurse. I've dressed every kind o' dreadful hurt, an' I got things here necessary for it. But you'll have to hold the basin."

Silent as always, the young man followed her to the cot and stood an instant looking down upon the girl, his homely face twitching with pity. Suddenly she opened her eyes on him, those soft, wild eyes. Their looks met, his grave and kind, hers piteous and imploring. Slowly terror faded from her little white face and hope colored it a wan rose.

"You're the doctor?" she whispered in a thread of sound. "You'll help me, won't you?"

Young John's shy manhood had not been without its allurements. He was a worthy young man and heir presumptive to his uncle's fortune, yet the profundities of his nature had been no more reached by those blandishments



They might have been the parents of a great race, Deucalion and Pyrrha about to fling the bones of their Mother Earth behind them.

than the depths of a lake are stirred by the flutterings of a summer's breeze. Now, in a breath, this little gypsy, wandering out of the night from nowhere, placed the tip of her finger upon the pulse of his life and quickened it to fever heat. He took her thin little hand in his.

"I'll help you," in his kind, indistinct voice.

Her fingers fluttered in his like a bird caught.

"I'm sick! I'm dreadful sick!" It was a child's cry of suffering.

"You'll be better real soon. We'll

fix you all up good." His silence found voice now.

Lee had brought the table close to the cot and set on it lamp, basin, cloths, and a bottle of some liquid. Then she drew away the quilt from the girl's foot, which was lying on a bundle of clean linen rags.

"You hold it free, by the ankle," she told him in a whisper.

Young John unclasped the girl's hand and took hold of her slim ankle with fingers that his will forced to be steady. The foot looked terribly cut and swollen to him, but the nurse whispered triumphantly, while she touched and moved it with her strong, maternal hands:

"It ain't so bad as I feared. No bones

broke." She washed out the cuts with hot water and the contents of the bottle, the girl uttering little cries of pain that made young John think of one of his lambs caught last year in a trap.

Lee brought a pungent-smelling drink from the stove.

"You sip this, pettie. 'Twill make you drowse off. Her fever's a-risin'," she murmured to young John. "I ain't pleased with that."

"I'll drive to the junction for the doctor. He's deemed an able man," he whispered back.

The girl stirred. "I want the doctor

should take my hand," she begged. "I can go to sleep so."

Young John's heavy, tanned face flushed up to his shock of ash-colored hair. He looked helplessly at Lee.

"You do it to please her." Her hand was on his shoulder.

John, coming in from rubbing down the horses, gave his nephew an odd look when he saw him seated by the bed, the hand of the strange girl clasped in his.

"She views it he's the doctor," Lee told him. "She's asleep now. You slip off." This to young John.

All the long, freezing drive to the junction, young John felt something warm touching his heart with quick little pressures. He thought it must be the girl's small fingers.

John had not offered to go in his nephew's place; such an idea had not occurred to him, and, if it had, he would have rejected it. The young should serve their elders. He had fed and clothed and provided for this penniless nephew thirty years. Young John should—and, to his credit, did—acknowledge the debt. He debated staying for the night, and had just decided that he had given her wood and water enough to last till morning when Lee spoke in her rich voice, softened by care for the girl:

"It's real comfortin' to think you're here. If I have to dress her hurt again, you'll be ready to help."

John accepted the situation by making himself comfortable on two chairs near the stove.

"You stretch you out on the bed. I'll call you if she wakes up. I shan't doze—don't you think it. I'm an old hand at keepin' awake nights, duck shootin' an' like that."

"Ain't it a wonderful time when you're out shootin', just between night an' mornin', when the moon's up still an' the mornin' star is glitterin' like a

diamond an' all kinds o' wild blooms blow their smells to you?"

Again John stared. "You been huntin' an' fishin' nights?"

"Oh, my country! More times'n I can count, with the boys. It's beautiful then; not rightly like this world at all."

John heartily disapproved these vagrant ways in womankind.

"You calc'late to farm it here?" He marked his disapproval by turning from the subject.

"Oh; some, I guess, betweenwhiles," easily. "I'm a nurse."

"Oh, that's it." Here was something to go on. "You heard we needed a nurse to Pettipaug since the Widow Dolly was took with a stroke?"

She nodded, smiling.

"Don't you forget to tell folks I'm a good one an' don't charge high," amazingly. "Now I'll see if I can catch me a pretty dream." Wrapping herself in a long, heavy cape, she lay down on the cot.

That night lived always in John's memory. He could find no magazine or paper to read; so, with the patience that had held him hours motionless behind a duck screen, he sat by the stove, moving about from time to time to put a stick on the fire, to cover the tossing girl, or to gaze out into the blackness of the night. The woman slept soundlessly, yet she, too, rose often, as if called, to perform some service for the girl. Once she changed the bandages on the foot, and for that she asked him to hold the lamp and basin. Sometimes they talked a little, in a fragmentary way, about the cold and other impersonal themes. She gave no more news of herself and did not ask any of him. Once she spoke anxiously of young John.

"He's gone a dreadful long time. You don't fear he's froze?"

"No," with scorn. "Didn't find the

doctor in his home, so drove on to rout him out some place else."

"Poor boy, he'll be all beat out," tenderly.

He was stirred by illogical anger, as if she had reproached him with seizing the easy part.

"John's strong as a moose. He don't make anythin' of an all night like this," he told her. Then, as if that impugned his own energies: "We're both of us tougher'n leather. All the Leverage men are built that way. The boy's father didn't die o' disease; he was killed by a tree fallin' on him."

She left him the last word; she always did.

When dawn was streaking the sky with flares of pale yellow and dim red, the doctor and young John came. Lee was already cooking breakfast, and John drawing water.

"I can hear my nephew a-comin' up the hill an' some one a-talkin' to him," he told her. "I won't fill up your room, but cut off home to breakfast."

She neither urged him to stay nor thanked him, only gave him her hand and smiled; yet John strode down the path, his head bent, as if the rising sun dazzled him.

The day was Sunday, and the Widow Salt had prepared an ample dinner—duck and fixings, coffee and mince pie. She was a thin woman, of a chilly neatness—like a winter room just swept and aired—and a bleak smile. She made the two men exceedingly comfortable, and if they had chosen to chop up the eight-day clock and feed it into the stove, would have asked no questions.

"John Leverage is a masterful man an' I know which side my bread's buttered," she often told her sister.

"I heard to meetin' the Amos Bowers' place is 'sold,'" she remarked as she passed the apple sauce.

"Who to?" John asked casually.

"Amelia Salt says it's a youngish woman an' her niece. She got it from 'Siah Chaffee that helped 'em settle. They drove over the mountain yesterday mornin', an' the man that fetched 'em put for home right off, leavin' their gear tumbled all in a hurrah in the yard."

"Um."

"'Siah says there wasn't more'n 'nough things to furnish one room, an' that real sparse, an' he didn't see any kind o' receptacle for garments. He called 'em gypsies, livin' 'long anyhow."

"'Siah's a judge o' proper livin'." John smiled blandly.

As 'Siah was both kin to the widow and notoriously shiftless, she bridled angrily, but continued in her smoothly acid tones:

"The youngish one is goin' to set up nursin' here."

"There's need o' that," John concluded the conversation. "The winter promises to be hard, an' that makes sickness."

As they left the table, young John said out of his silence:

"If you're agreeable to it, I'd like to take those women up to Bowers' some o' our good duck an' pie. I don't reckon they're any too well plenished."

John was a generous neighbor in what he counted need, so he answered heartily:

"I'll go 'long with some fresh eggs. They're good for the sick."

The bare kitchen was full of sunshine, shining clean, and steaming with an aromatic saucepan on the stove. Lee had picked long sprays of the crimson barberry growing near the house and put them into a pitcher on a shelf by the sick girl's cot. She herself had on a gay knitted jacket and a starched white apron. To John it seemed as if all the light and warmth and color of the day rayed out from the woman holding both hands out to them.

"If this ain't neighborly! You brought me my Sunday dinner? You're good!"

Her words poured out on them in a golden flood.

Young John smiled down at her; then his eyes ranged beyond to where, propped against pillows, the sick girl smiled dimly at them.

"It's the doctor, sweetness," called Lee. "The doctor that really helped you."

The girl's cheeks were tinged with reviving strength; her eyes were less piteous. She put her hot little hand in young John's.

"I did think you were the doctor when I saw you standin' there." Her voice was sweet and light as a child's. "An' I did feel better right off."

Young John held her hand as if it were spun glass; his whole body trembled; his lips moved soundlessly.

"I'll draw you a bucket o' water," he muttered after a desperate pause.

Lee threw him a gay smile. She was like a mother delighted with her children. Old John noticed nothing, busily unpacking his gifts.

"If there's nothin' I can do for you, I'll be goin' back," he said, when the generous dinner lay upon the table.

"I'll walk with you a piece. You can show me the road to town. I ain't had a breath o' air to-day, an' I'm an outdoor creature." She flung her dark cape around her and started along the path.

John touched her arm.

"Step over here, an' I'll point out to you the sightliest prospect in the valley."

The day was a still cold, and gloriously brilliant with the peculiar, cloudless light of midwinter. From the rock where they stood, no spire of the village gleamed, no smoke from farmhouse chimney wound skyward; only the blue glitter of the river, the wide fields of the valley, and the pine-dark

hills stretched before them. Neither man nor animal moved in the solitude.

John, clear against the sky line, tall, powerful, lithe, with his bold features and hawk look, and Lee, beside him, with her strong shoulders, deep bosom, alert tread, and star eyes, were a splendid pair; they might have been the parents of a great race, Deucalion and Pyrrha about to fling the bones of their Mother Earth behind them.

She spoke first. "It's noble."

His answer came quick from his heart:

"I've been offered a round sum for this field—it's the entrance to Stan Getman's wood lot—but I won't let any man own my prospect. I always stop here to take a look off."

"Things that are big look big from here, don't they? An' the little ones don't show up at all. That's the way I want to see life." Her voice, like some deep-toned musical instrument, vibrated in the still air.

"My forefathers, way back to the first settlement, bought this land o' the Injins, an' paid a fair price for it, the records say. An' they fought it away from the forest an' the rocks, an' made it a goodly heritage. I got reason to be proud an' to hold to their faith an' works an' patience." These were the innermost thoughts of the man, never shared with even the mother from whom he drew his poetry.

"If we could only see the big things clear all the time, like that great boulder beyond, we'd never make the mistakes we do." She was following her thoughts still.

"My forbears were all honest, God-fearin' men an' women. I've no cause to feel shamed for one o' them." He said it to himself more than to her, following his trail.

They moved on around the shoulder of the hill, and now they could see the village of Pettipaugh in the cup of the hills, the gold vane on the church

spire shining in the sun, and, beyond it, on the slopes of the hills, the rocky farms.

"Ain't that pretty?" She smiled at the placid village, safe and warm in its winter snugness.

"That's where you'll find your patients." The sight of the village had reawakened his curiosity over her. "Did you say that little girl was kin to you?"

Lee laughed out loud.

"I guess all the curiosity ain't in womenfolk."

John's face set severely; he could take a joke on himself like any good-tempered man, but this was to trifle with his dignity.

"We'd best be movin' on. It's consid'ble cold here—unless you favor this kind o' weather for picnics," sardonically.

Lee looked at him with a relenting smile.

"I never saw Martha Judson till five days ago. Her folks moved in next door to where I was livin' in—over beyond the mountain."

"Is she visitin' you?" In spite of his resolve never to ask another question of her, interest spurred him on.

The woman curled the cloak tighter around her.

"She's come to live with me. I had to bring her—she'd 'a' died there. Why, John Leverage, that man an' woman abused that little, gentle child!" Her voice rose in her passion till it rang against the hills. "They worked her like a mill horse an' they starved her an' they abused her."

The memory of the small, suffering face deepened John's voice.

"The scoundrels!"

"They looked good enough—had a good house, an' brought cows an' a horse with 'em. But they were a cruel pair. The woman was always whinin' an' lamentin', an' the man was forever

ragin' around, an' both o' 'em kep' at the poor child, night an' day. The houses were so close built I could hear 'em right through the walls."

"Poor little thing! What kin were they to her?"

"Day before yesterday," she swept on, unregarding, "I saw 'em drive off early in the mornin'. Then I saw Patty out in the yard hangin' out clothes, enough for a regiment o' soldiers. I could see she'd been cryin' herself half blind an' looked sick, besides. So I walked right into the house after her."

"Were you acquainted with her?"

"Never spoke a word to her in my life. But in twenty minutes I had her in my lap tellin' me her whole story. It's pitiful." Lee took a few steps down the path. "Her mother an' father died when she was such a baby child she couldn't hardly call them to mind. They had some property, an' they left that an' their baby in charge to this man an' woman, who were cousins an' all the blood kin they had. The man an' woman lived up Patty's heritage an' put upon her an' maltreated her so you couldn't bear to hear it."

"Did she tell you all that then?"

"A good part o' it. I guess I haven't begun to hear a quarter o' what that child's undergone, because she's gentle dispositioned an' timid an' hasn't any friends." All the sparkle and color had rained from Lee's face; only her blue eyes shone with cold anger like glacier water. "I said to her: 'Don't you stand that man an' woman one day more. You ain't bound to by any duty.'"

"What can I do?" says she.

"Come right away with me. I'm a-goin' to leave here, anyhow. I got a place over the mountain, in a town called Pettipaug. I'll go out to nurse an' you can keep house with me."

"They won't let me," says the poor, little, broken-hearted thing.

"Well, the end of it was I picked her

right up in my arms, as you might say, an' carried her over here."

"Without so much as a word to the man an' woman?"

"She wrote 'em a letter tellin' 'em she'd gone off with me. I expect likely the man'll be 'long to make a hurrah boys, when he finds out where I live."

"You send for me quick if he does."

Her somber face lighted with a smile.

"I will! He can't do anythin' to her. She's twenty-one years old, an' that's a woman."

Another side of the matter turned itself to John's shrewd mind.

"Did she get hold o' any o' her property?"

"Oh, my country! That's all scattered hitherty-yander years ago. She brought the clothes she stood in, a change o' garments, an' her parents' pictures. That's every livin' thread."

"How'll she live?"

"Keep house for me while I'm away nursin'."

"You got any means?"

With dancing eyes and laughing lips, Lee searched in the pocket of her skirt.

"My pile!" She held out to him a crumpled five-dollar bill.

"An' you've pledged yourself to work for two?"

The woman flung up her head with a magnificent gesture.

"That's happiness. It's workin' for just one that breaks your back."

To John it sounded moonshine madness.

"You might be a charge on the town."

"Now you're talkin' foolishness," indulgently. "Not while I got these two hands. Why, I've pitched hay 'longside o' the men, an' kep' up with them, too. Oh, no! You can't scare me." Then suddenly her face changed to a beautiful look of love. "Why, if you'd 'a' been there with that poor, little, forsaken, terrified child you'd 'a' carried her away from those miscreants if you'd had to crawl on your hands an'

knees to do it." She swept away from this in a wide swing. "I thank you many times for that nice dinner. I'm a-goin' home now to het it up."

While his uncle and Lee were out on the hillside, young John had drawn water, split more kindling, and stirred the fire to a regal heat. Then he sat down in a pool of sunshine to wait, his eyes on the bed where the sick girl slept. Suddenly his intent gaze was aware that slow tears were stealing down her cheeks.

"What is it?" He hurried to her side. "Is the pain worse?"

"You're so kind to me." Her chin quivered like a hurt child's; she choked on a sob. "Helpin' her dress my foot an' takin' that tejus ride in the dark an' cold!"

"I'd 'a' done it for anybody," he protested.

"That's it," she sobbed. "It's your goodness. I never saw anythin' like it before, yours an' hers."

"Why, what kind o' folks was you raised with? There ain't a man in Pettipaugh, not to be called a *man*, wouldn't 'a' done just what I did."

Patty fixed him with her great eyes, tragic with recollections.

"I've been raised with folks that beat me over the head with the ax handle when I knocked over the milk pail an' spilled the mornin's milkin'."

"What!"

"See that?" She pulled up the sleeve of her coarse little nightgown and showed on her thin arm a long white scar. "He did it with the hot poker when I broke his new pipe."

Young John's brown face turned a sick drab; his breath whistled in his throat.

"Who—are—these—folks?" He dragged out the words.

"Their names are Sarah an' Willetts Porter. They're kin to me, an' when mother an' father died—oh, years ago!—they lef' me to 'em, an' a sum o'

money. 'Twas a big one, I guess, to take care o' me. They deemed Sarah an' Willetts were good, kind folks who would be extra careful o' me because they hadn't any children o' their own. But she's in a sick, complainin' state always, an' he's just a—a—"

"Brute!"

"That's the name Lee gives him. If she hadn't 'a' come in that day—it's only two days ago, but it seems like it was a month—an' brought me here, I guess I'd have just died. I was too worn out to stand any more." Her tears flowed fast now.

Something rose in young John's throat that held his speech; a mist blurred his eyes.

"I just know Willetts will find me out an' come for me. But Lee says not to be frightened—she'll keep him away from me."

"If he tries to lay one o' his fingers on you, I'll wring his neck." Young John had found voice at last.

"You're all so good to me," she repeated softly.

Young John's chest heaved with a great yearning to take this small, soft, sweet creature into his arms and hold her against his heart till she could hear it throbbing with love of her. He laid his clumsy, work-calloused hand on the quilt.

"Don't you fret you. Nothin' an' nobody's goin' to hurt you. You got friends now to take care o' you, an' you're goin' to get well real fast, an' you're goin' to be prospered an' happy." This was the longest speech young John had ever made in his life.

The Leaverages, old John and young John, sat in the open door of their barn mending harness. The day was a mild one in midwinter, and these thrifty farmers had taken thought for the spring plowing. The barn crowned the summit of a slow hill, below which spread out acres of brown earth wait-

ing for tillage and dark stretches of timberland, old John's holding. The two worked in their wonted friendly silence, John whistling softly a lugubrious hymn tune to a lively quickstep. Suddenly his hawk glance caught a glimmer in the world below.

"Somebody's streakin' it across my ten-acre corn lot. A woman, too!"

Young John followed his uncle's gaze, but without comment.

"Must be a stranger who don't know."

No reply to this either.

"I vow it's that nurse from the Amos Bowers' place!"

Young John had been aware of this all along.

"You view it she ain't been told there's no thoroughfare in my corn lot?"

As young John had the night before related in detail to Lee Wheat the famous case of Leverage *versus* Pettipaug, in which his uncle had succeeded in closing to the town people a path open to them some ninety years, that wise youth chose to regard this as a rhetorical question merely.

"Likely enough she'd cut right through it just the same, if her needments seemed to require it," John pronounced in cold wrath.

Young John wiped away a grin with the back of his hand.

"I'll make it my business she shall get this matter firsthand," calmly. "Where's she to, anyhow, beyond there?"

Now young John thought it time to speak.

"Nursin' Lebanon Tuck's wife."

"That slack-twisted woman made out to be took with a new complaint?"

"It's kind of an old one—she's got her ninth baby."

"She look to get any pay for her services? She been told Leb's nigh onto the town?"

"I heard her say somebody's got to



John stitched his needle into the leather and drew it out, his face like iron.

tend Mis' Tuck. She couldn't be let die just because she's poor."

"Certain not." John scrutinized his nephew for signs of the irony he sometimes thought dwelt deep in him. "But they've got folks over Candlelight Hill way could do for 'em, if they were a mind to. That nurse has got to earn wages, so she an' that child she's run off with can support themselves."

Young John stood up. "I'm goin' over to Eph Sands for that seed he promised."

His uncle watched him stride downhill, a big, solid figure.

"Seed! He's after Lee Wheat." He frowned harshly, while his mind traveled back over the last six weeks.

For several days after Martha's accident, John had gone to the strangers to help them in various neighborly ways, cutting wood, digging paths in the snow, nailing up loose doors. He had found Lee her first case, too—a sick farmer whose expenses he, as custodian of the church poor fund, paid. Young John had followed along like a faithful dog, and had sat in silence while Lee and his uncle talked.

Martha's foot was well. Lee was known by the village. John saw no duty to aid her further. Did young John go by himself to the mountain farm? He blew out the flame of this ugly fear before it could even scorch his heart.

"Old enough to be his mother." And even as he said it, Lee's face of imperishable youth taunted him.

A timid step on the path and a shadow on the threshold drew his eyes from his work.

"Afternoon, Leb." His opinion of the visitor as "a poor tool" crisped his voice.

"Afternoon, John."

"Have a seat." He motioned Jeb to the stool young John had just left.

Lebanon Tuck was a little, round-faced, apple-cheeked man, like a baby that had stolen its grandfather's gray wig. Even his puckered forehead and moist brown eyes were like those of a baby bereft of a toy.

"Sightly day, John." He had a small, warm voice.

"Yes, nice day."

"Forehanded for your spring plowin', ain't you?"

"Time's comin' nearer every day."

With each sentence, John's voice had a drier brevity.

The little man rubbed his plump hands together.

"She's laid by again."

"Got a nice baby? Boy or girl?"

John picked up the reference with understanding.

"Yes, yes, healthy child. Little girl. Abigail, after my mother, we call her. But Rushy, she ain't gettin' round like she ought. I guess she's all beat out with work an' worry." He blinked his mild, bright eyes rapidly.

John stitched away on his harness.

"We got a powerful good nurse—that new woman from the mountain. Why, seems if she did the work o' four."

Still no comment.

The little man swallowed chokingly.

"John, I'm on the rocks! I can't meet that note I gave you, no way in the world. It's got to run on a piece longer."

"Um."

"When summer comes, my oldest boy'll be back from school. He can work out on his uncle's farm, an' I'm lookin' to have excellent crops this season." Poor Lebanon had been looking to have excellent crops for twenty years and never yet had reaped them.

John pondered in a silence that grew cruelly long, while his visitor reddened, then paled.

"It's old schoolmates, Johnny," he pleaded.

John's voice was like a severe, but kindly, schoolmaster's:

"I will let it run another year, without interest, Leb."

The little man turned away his face to hide its quiver.

"Thank ye, John. You're a good friend." He steadied his voice and hurried on: "An' I got to ask you to make it bigger. I'm obligated to have a couple o' hundred more to see me through, till Rushy's up an' the first crops come in." The words fell over one another in a desperate rush.

This time John spoke instantly:

"Sorry, Leb, but I can't see my way to do it."

Lebanon's little rosy face went gray.

"I got to have it. This ain't no fancy farmin'—it's doctor's trade, an' the woman that's nursin' her, an' all like that."

"I see your case," John said very kindly, "an' I see it's a pitiful one, but you got to seek aid elsewhere. There's your wife's kin, the Hubbardsons."

"They ain't got a penny to spare."

"Your sister Temperance? Your brother Horace?"

"Staggerin' under their own burdens. I've tried the judge an' Cap'n Dowell, an' they can't, an' there ain't another man in Pettipaug that's got the means but you."

John did not disclaim his wealth.

"I can't do it, Leb. I feel for you, for it's an awful place for a man to be in, but——"

"Awful?" His voice shrilled out strangely. "You don't know a word that's fit to tell about what it is! Why, John, I owe to the gen'ral store, an' to the doctor, an' to the school where my boy goes, an'— Oh, I can't look a man in the face any place!"

"That's a waste o' your resources, sendin' your boy away to school to study to be a preacher. Let him be a farmer like his father."

"Never!" All the toil and the poverty and the despair of Lebanon Tuck's life shrieked aloud in that word. Impotent rage stirred in the gentle heart of the incompetent, good little man against this neighbor, known to be one of the richest men in the county, who, sitting in the midst of possessions inherited from generations of prosperous ancestors, coldly condemned his boy to the treadmill, the life of a poor farmer. Then he remembered his sick wife and empty cupboard, and crushed down his anger.

"It ain't for myself I ask it, Johnny," he pleaded, his voice shaking on each word. "It's for Rushy an' the children. They got to have some kind o' food an' clothin'. You an' Rushy used to be kind o' mates when we all went to Pond Meadow School together, 'long back more'n a thousand years. She was a pretty-faced girl then, you mind?"

John stitched his needle into the leather and drew it out, his face like iron. He had done a great deal for Leb in letting the note run another year without interest; more he would not do if the man begged till night. All Pettipaug knew his "yea" was "yea," his "nay" "nay" unchangingly.

Lebanon knew it, too. He stumbled to his feet, turned without a word, and plodded down the path, his rosy, pleasant face sunk into his coat collar.

"Good-by, Leb. I hope Rushy gets on her feet soon," John called after him, in a voice of sympathy. He was very sorry for the shiftless, unlucky

Tucks, but he didn't see why he should be expected to support another man's wife and nine children. He thought of them and their troubles quite ten minutes, in a worried fashion, planning some way out for them. Then the question of the crop for his new field, bought from the Widow Pratt, worked itself into his mind to the driving out of all else.

The sun began to drop toward the mountain; blue shadows reached their long fingers out over the fields; a flock of crows, with high, raucous cryings, flew over the barn to their nests in the woods.

Some one came flying up the path right against the sun—a woman, tall and strong, yet light, as if blown along by the soft wind, the glow that shone in her hair turning it to spun gold.

"Lee Wheat!" murmured John, and stood up to greet her.

"My, you've got a pleasant spot for your barn!" Her voice panted a little through her red lips. "But it's a climber to reach it."

John addressed her with ceremony:

"Good afternoon. Will you come into my house, or will you be seated here?"

She dropped on the stool, and immediately it took on the nature of a throne. John studied her in his cool manner, and disapproved of her heartily. What way was this for a woman to go rammiting around the country in a skirt hiked up to her shoe tops, an outlandish cape thing, and a hood red as a turkey cock, and charge into a man's premises like a runaway colt? He wanted to ask, "Where's the fire?" but judged silence the dignified attitude. All this woman's courses affronted his standards of conduct in woman, from her shabby garments to her detachment from proper kith and kin. Yet, when he looked at her, something seemed to dazzle him.

Lee laughed out sweetly.

"Oh, let me talk outdoors always, an' this is a sweet place."

There again her extravagant language amazed him. She looked off across the country, wrapped in its winter duns and drabs, with eyes that grew vague, their blue filmed by dreams as the sky is filmed by clouds. John set himself to wait on her mood; then, to his chagrin, spoke out first amazingly:

"Did you want to see me on business?"

The fire flashed back into her eyes as if switched on by an inner current.

"Pleasure!" dancing their light at him. "I want you should lend that poor little rabbit of a Lebanon Tuck that two hundred dollars."

John was petrified into silence.

"He came home just now all broke down, an' to keep him off his wife I had him tell me what 'twas had happened. I'd have given it to him myself if I'd 'a' had it."

"I believe you!" John found speech for his view of her entire reckless conception of life.

"He's got to have it. Why, poor little fellow"—her voice was maternally pitiful—"he hasn't got anythin' lef' in the world. I baked up the last cup o' flour this mornin'."

"Do you know his oldest boy is away to a high-priced school, studyin' for the ministry, an' his oldest girl takes piano lessons, an' his wife wore a silk gown to meetin' last summer?"

"But none o' those things is paid for!" This as a triumphant vindication of Leb's business methods.

John smiled sardonically in recognition of woman's sense of logic. Men didn't reason with womenfolks; they just told them a thing *had to be* so.

"An' his cow's died, so he's obliged to buy milk; an' two o' his little girls can't put foot to the ground, their shoes are so wore out; an' the man at the general store is houndin' him for his bill."

She leaned toward him till her big blue eyes were right in his face.

"I feel for Leb an' Rushy," he answered her. "They're poor tools, both o' 'em, an' they always were, for I've known them, root an' branch, from the start. Leb was forever forgettin' to bring his dinner pail to school, though he lived four miles off, an' havin' to get bites from other fellows. But they ain't had even common good luck, an' they've fallen in distressful times for certain." He hesitated, for John Leverage never boasted; but her eyes seemed to draw the words right out of him. "I've loaned him a considerable sum o' money, an' agreed to let the note run another twelve months without interest."

"He told me. You're *good*!" Again her eyes softened beautifully. "An' you're goin' to lend him that extry two hundred. Don't speak. Just think about it. I know you are!"

John's mouth shut in a grim line; he made no other answer.

"Why, he's desperate, that poor little man is—not one dollar, even, in his pocket, an' nowhere to turn but you. An' he's an upright man, if he hasn't much faculty—not a single bad habit, an' so gentle an' helpful at home. If you could see him there! Why, he's *got to be helped*!"

John found himself defending his action.

"I agree with you there—he's got to be helped—but I don't see why in thunder I'm expected to do it all!" ending with a thump of indignation.

Lee put her hand on his knee urgently.

"Because you're the only one who's able. I'm doing all I can. I told him I wouldn't take a cent o' pay—just my keep."

"You had no kind o' business to do it, either. You're as poor as him, an' you've got to work for yourself an' that

child you took, too!" John looked upon Martha as still in tiers.

"Oh, us!" She laughed in the midst of her stress sweetly. "There's bushels o' nuts an' berries all over the mountain."

Restraining his irritation, John began to stitch again on his harness. Lee took the needle out of his hand as if he were her son.

"Look at me!" she commanded. "You're the only man in this township that's got more'n he needs himself an' not a soul dependent on him."

"I got my nephew, John."

"Him!" Her cry of scorn conjured up before them big, steady young John, able to cut or saw or plow his way through any world. "John Leverage, you hark to me. You're rich, an' a poor neighbor that's at the end o' his rope comes pitifully to you in the name o' his wife an' child an' asks you for some o' the crumbs that fall from your table."

"Pretty sizable crumb—two hundred dollars," grimly. "You want I should stop my subscription for the next five year to foreign missions?"

"Land, no! I haven't anythin' again' foreign missions. I've often thought 'twould be more enlivenin' nursin' heathen Chinamen than some o' the heathen in these parts. You give to them an' to him, too."

"Will you furnish me one solid reason why I should hand over two hundred dollars o' the money I've worked hard to get to help Leb Tuck make his son into a preacher?" He was exasperated into argument at last.

Lee glowed at him, all her splendor of hair and color and eyes.

"He needs it."

Again the man's face was like steel.

"What you lookin' to do with all your money? There ain't any pockets in a shroud. Why, John"—in the urge of her desire she called him thus, her voice thrilling over the name—"you ain't got

more'n twenty-five years longer to live likely, an' then it's all over, your chance o' bein' kind an' helpful an' holdin' out a hand to them that are fallen. Don't miss this *one* time, even; it ain't goin' to come back just like that ever."

The man turned away stonily from those beseeching eyes.

"The Leverages are tolerable long-lived folks. I guess I ain't quite so near the century line as you make out." He reared his magnificent head with its thick hair.

"Fifty, then! Two hundred dollars! In two years you'll forget you ever had it. You won't have to sacrifice one least little thing o' your comfort, just figures in your bank book; an' it's a sufferin' fellow creature that cries for it—a little boy you used to sit side of in school." Her face was all soft and gentle and pleading; her eyes shone through tears like stars in a mist; her voice was vibrant with the beat of her heart.

He seemed to see his mother—a beautiful woman, too—grieved at some hard compulsion laid by him on his younger brothers, to hear her voice saying tenderly: "Now, Johnny boy, be kind to them." He opened his hands unsteadily, worked their muscles back and forth in doubt, then clenched them into fists.

"I will not lend Lebanon another cent," very low.

Instantly Lee was on her feet. She knew the hour of yielding had passed, unimproved. Her emotion sank into herself. She was as cold as he.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Leverage." And, gathering her preposterous cape around her, she turned to go.

He could not have her leave him thus.

"Wait a minute!" And even to himself his voice was hoarse. "I'm goin' over your way. I'll tackle up an' drive you to Leb's."



"Catch hold!" In the still air the voice sounded sweet and clear and yet a long way off, as if it might come from a star.

Lee dropped back on the stool as one from whom virtue has gone out.

In a few moments they were driving

down the lane behind his two fast horses. Lee had accepted his hand into the wagon, but she could not speak yet,

nor did John make any effort to talk. Beyond the farm, they turned into a lonesome road that wound by the side of a stream, the overflow from a long-unused milldam. The stream was skimmed with thin ice under which the water showed black.

"Ice's got weak these few warm days," the man said, in his usual voice.

"Yes." Hers still trembled.

"There's a boy skatin' on it, though. Beats all what risks young ones take for sport."

The road now turned away from the stream in a curve around a hill. The sun was going fast; in the woods only its pale afterglow lingered. There was no house nor human being anywhere; the trees were somber pines; away off on the marshes a loon uttered its wild and desolate cry.

"Kind o' forsaken spot." John turned his horses around the hill as he spoke, and pointed with his whip to the deserted building moldering into ruin by the dam. The stream of the race was shut off, but just below the fall the water lay in a dark pool, the first star of evening reflected, ghostlike, in it.

"Lonesome place," John repeated; then, in astonishment: "There's that boy skatin' straight for open water!"

"He's not skatin', he's walkin'." Lee was startled out of her distress. "It's Lebanon Tuck!"

Before he could stop his horses, she had leaped over the wheel to the ground and was running to the pond. The mud in the road had deadened all sound of their coming evidently, for the man did not turn his head, although he quickened his pace, reached the edge of the ice, halted, peered into the water timidly, and stood still.

John sprang out, twisted his reins around a stump, and started after Lee, all at a great speed. He reached the ice as soon as she did. At that moment Lebanon gave a little running

bound and dropped it to the open water. John rushed back to his wagon, jerked out a long hitching rope, and ran up the stream until he reached the dam. He pounded along like a galloping horse, his body forging against the air. He climbed the slippery rocks to the top of the dam, lay down in a scum of mud and water, and flung the rope down into the pool beneath.

"Ketch—hold—Leb!" he shouted, in gasps.

The man beneath, struggling instinctively for life, now that it was slipping from him, swam toward the rope. The water was icy, his coat heavy, his strength feeble. He made little progress, but he reached out for the rope. John strained his arms down, his body hanging half over the edge of the dam. The rope was too short.

"Keep paddlin'!" he shouted. "I'll climb down onto the rocks."

"Hurry!" groaned the other, all wish for death forgotten.

John let himself down onto the rocks that projected from the face of the dam. They were covered with ice and mud that craved wary stepping. Cautiously yet swiftly he crawled along them, wound his arm around a bush growing in the cracks, and dropped the rope down a second time.

The drowning man gripped it in a furious clutch, hung for an instant on it, and sank sharply out of sight. The rope had broken! John dived into the pond, disappeared, and came up with his hand on Lebanon's coat collar. The little man, whose round face was stricken lean with terror, twisted his arms around John's neck in a death strangle.

"Let go, Leb! Let go!" John shouted, and beat himself free with smashing blows.

When Lebanon hung unconscious in the bend of his arm, he began to swim ashore. It was heavy work, for the water was a dead cold, like ice itself,

the weight of the other man was leaden heavy, and his strength was sapped by his rush and struggle. Still he plowed along with all the forces of his wonderful body and gained the side of the pond.

When the mill was built, the owner had constructed a wall of solid, tight masonry, stone and mortar, at both sides of the dam, that the overflow at freshet times might not eat away the soft mud banks. This wall stood stout and smooth as the day it was first fashioned, five feet above his head.

John trod water thuddingly, while he sought with fingers and eyes a crevice into which he could thrust his hand for a hold. The wall was sheeted with ice. On the top stood a little tree, sturdy, deep-rooted, one thick-fibered branch jutting out and down. If he could reach this branch with his free hand!

Bending his knees until his whole head sank under water, he leaped up with so terrible a strain of heart and sinews that the sky whirled red before him. His hand closed, viselike, upon empty air. He dropped back like a stone into the pool.

As he came up, his brain cried out to him in anguished irony: "I sold my life for two hundred dollars!"

If he had given that to Leb, the little man would never have tried, in a crazed weakness, to kill himself.

What now? Try for the branch again? It was not in him. Swim to the other side? The same wall would front him there. Swim down to the ice? Rotten as it was all along its edges, he could find no purchase there. Swim to the face of the dam and crawl up its ice-coated, jagged rocks? That was his only chance—a thin one, for his half-frozen body could make little heading now.

One other chance remained: to drop the unconscious man, who might even be dead now, and, thus lightened, reach the dam swiftly and climb unhindered.

Another man might have grasped at this chance, then flung it from him. It never touched John Leverage's reason at all; he and Leb sank or swam as one man. He ground his teeth together doggedly.

"Ketch hold!" In the still air the voice sounded sweet and clear and yet a long way off, as if it might come from a star.

John looked straight up into a face white and strange, but ablaze with the fires of two great eyes. They sang like bugles to him of courage and hope and salvation. He made sure that Lee was on her knees behind the tree, that with both arms around its little stem she was holding down to him her cape; then he twisted his muscles for the impossible, caught the cape, and shot himself up.

A savage, blind struggle, his feet digging into crevasses, his hands clawing into the cape, his back and shoulders straining until the muscles cracked. A plunge like a stuck moose, and a thud face down onto the grass. For one blessed instant the pain and cold were blurred in a haze of unconsciousness; then a voice commanded:

"Get up! He'll die!"

Racked in every bone, he staggered to his feet.

"Pull off his shoes an' overcoat. Wrap him in my cape an' the wagon blankets," Lee ordered. "Take his shoulders. I got his feet."

They dragged Lebanon to the wagon, tumbled him and themselves in, and lashed the horses to a gallop. John held the reins in mechanically skilled hands, and steadied the other man between his knees; but all thought and feeling were beaten out of him by the engulfing waves of cold that swept his body every moment.

Young John opened the door, and without a question helped carry Lebanon into the kitchen, gloriously warm from the good stove.

"The widow's out," he remarked, and without another word set to stripping off Lebanon's wet clothes.

John stumbled into his own room, glowing, too, with its little stove, dragged off his clothes, and rubbed some sort of life into himself. In a moment young John was in upon him.

"She says drink it." He thrust a mug at his uncle.

John gulped down the raw spirits and felt the seeds of warmth sprout up in the chilled channels of his body.

"How's Leb?"

"Comin' round." He vanished as he had come.

Feeling like the shaky grandsire of himself, John wandered out to see how things were. The kitchen steamed with mingled odors of wet woolen, hot rum, and boiling coffee. The lounge was pulled to the fire, and on it, wrapped in mountains of blankets, lay Lebanon, his round, apple face a pinched blue, his buttonhole of a mouth hanging open. Lee knelt beside him, feeding him sips of coffee.

"Ain't he just a-doin' splendid!" She cooed to him as if he were indeed the sick baby he looked.

Lee still wore her hood pushed back from her hot, moist face.

The rescued man turned his soft rabbit eyes to John.

"You saved my life, Johnny," he whispered. "I suppose I ought to thank you, but I donno—I donno. I ain't man 'nough to want to live an' face what I got to."

Lee smiled her lovely, warm smile at him.

"Now, Mr. Tuck, with that good wife a-waitin' for you, an' those pretty-behaved children, don't you talk foolishness. Your friend, John, here, he's got a present for you."

She pushed John out of the room with a sweep of her arm. She closed the forerom door and faced him, tall and straight and aflame with purpose.

"John Leverage"—her low voice rang like a bell in his heart—"you nigh about murdered that little man in there. Now you give him his two hundred dollars. Don't you dare to say no to me."

"His two hundred!" weakly.

Lee's face was close to his, both her hands were on his shoulders.

"Please, please, dear John!" as his mother might have begged. "You've read a fearful page out o' the book o' life this hour. Don't let its lesson go all unlearned."

She pressed her hands on his shoulders stressfully. John, looking down at the face raised to his and thinking how moving its solemnity was, forgot to answer.

"You got any money by you now?" went on the voice coaxingly. "You just tell me where 'tis, an' I'll fetch it."

"I sold a cow for seventy dollars this mornin'. It's in the tin box behind my desk, an' the key's in my wet waistcoat pocket." John started as if some one else had spoken for him.

Lee was back with a leather bag nimbly.

"Come!" Her hands drew him now into the kitchen. "Put it in his hand," she whispered, her lips somewhere close to his ear.

John, out of his daze, groped vaguely for tales of demoniac possession. Certainly his sane wits would never counsel him to give Tuck seventy dollars, yet there he was, slipping the bag into the man's slack fingers and muttering after Lee like a dull child a lesson:

"It's for you, Leb—an' I'll get the rest to-morrow. It's a present."

Then he sank down on the rocker, too weak to stand. Lebanon and young John stared at old John and then at each other, and he stared back in speechless bewilderment. But Lee spoke out in her mellow voice as tranquilly as if no extraordinary matters were marshaling themselves before her:

"You say the widow's away for the night? I'll stir up some kind of a meal for you menfolks. Young John, you want to go an errand for me?"

John's heart jarred queerly as he caught the glance that flitted between the two, hers warmly trusting, the young man's protecting.

"Old enough to be his mother," the old rebuttal.

Lee had begun to rummage for the mixing board; young John was gone; Lebanon still murmured drowsily snatches of the thanks too great for words. John sat in the rocking-chair, weak of body, dazed of mind, following the smooth motions of the woman as she moved from cupboard to stove.

"Why, Lee!" His eyes opened wide. "What's that you've done to your arm?"

Lee glanced down carelessly.

"'Twas when we were gettin' him out," with lowered voice for Lebanon, who slept.

John was at her side.

"You let me see." He pushed away the cotton sleeve from the round, supple arm.

"What kind o' work is it, leavin' it all like that?" He touched with the tip of his finger the long, raw gash from wrist to elbow.

"I hadn't time to see to it at first, an' it don't ache now." Her wince of pain betrayed her.

Now it was he who drew her into the forerom, still holding her arm, while he found in the closet old linen and an oily bottle.

"Spirits o' turpentine," he told her, pouring the pungent liquid into a saucer. "Pretty rigorous treatment, but it washes out any poison maybe's got into an open cut."

He made her sit down in a chair, soaked the cloth in the turpentine, and ran it into the cut thoroughly.

"Bite some?" he asked gently.

Her answer was a plume of sobs

and a rush of tears. John nearly upset the bottle in his amazement. Here was a woman who had shown a man's strength and coolness and a man's disregard for pain weeping now like a bruised child.

"Why—why!" he stammered. "Is it bad like that?"

"It—it—smarts—terrible!" Her face was hidden now in her free arm.

The most extraordinary excitement seized John Leverage, first selectman, deacon in the church, president of the bank. He wanted to fall on his knees and take this big, soft, beautiful creature into his arms and hold her hard and croon over her.

"This hurrah o' bein' in the mill pond twitched us all head over heels," he admonished himself, turning the winches of self-control with a grind.

Lee lifted her face, all wet with tears, and smiled adorably at him.

"I guess you're kind o' outdone with foolishness like this," without a shadow of shame. "But that did sting powerful lively."

John bound up her arm in a silence he dared not break lest he should say: "There, there, darlin' girl, don't you take on so!" He could not even thank her for his life, saved by her courage.

When supper was over, and Lebanon stowed away snugly in the "forerom chamber"—a proud room kept for the rare guests at the farm—Lee drove away with young John to Rusha Tuck. John held her hands hard in both his as he helped her into the wagon and made the speech he had been rehearsing the last hour steadily, slowly, as he might be advocating an increased tax in town meeting.

"Lee Wheat, this afternoon, by your courage an' your sound sense, you saved my life, for I would 'a' been drowned or froze in Knott's mill pond if you hadn't 'a' held down your cape to me. An' I thank you now, an' I will feel gratitude to you all my life, an' you



And John knew his heart slowly drawn out of his body to lie in her two hands.

can count on me for any help you need any time."

Lee flashed on him her radiant smile, which pain and weariness could not dim.

"We're a great team, you an' me, John, to haul folks through!" And she was up and off, with only the sound of her voice lingering in the quiet starlight.

But when John lay in his bed, looking off across the dim reaches of the fields and up to the kind stars, palely shining, it was in no such staid terms that he told her his heart.

"I'm goin' loony all along o' that chill I got in the pond," he denounced himself fiercely, as he thrashed about under the warm quilts. "I don't countenance that fashion o' women, ever,

strealin' round the country without kith or kin, an' come out o' the Lord knows what kind o' origins."

At that he slept, and in his dream whispered her foolish, unwomanly name as if he had been a loveforn lad of twenty.

Little Lebanon Tuck, who had stirred up all the pother, drove home the next day as rosy and smiling as ever, and, warmed to the core by his two hundred dollars, set about his spring planting in his usual cheery, incompetent fashion. Brawny John Leaverage, however, had taken a chill deep into his bones, and lay in bed swathed deep in flannels and liniment, twisted by misery in every muscle. He endured in grim silence, emitting not even a sigh when young

John, in the act of lifting him up, jolted his bed like an earthquake, or the widow set the lamp where it would shine most directly into his eyes. And this was all the more to be reckoned to his account because never in all his life had he spent twenty-four hours in bed.

At the 'end of a fortnight, he crept out into the foreroom, clear of pain, but childishly weak and savagely ill-humored.

"He's comin' right 'long now," the widow told young John, after his uncle had assured him, "I've seen some dun-derin' fools in my time, but I never yet met up with a bigger gump than you, to put that bowl right on the edge o' the table where it's bound to fall off."

Later she addressed him from the safe coign of the door:

"Mr. Leverage, John's gone to mill, an' I got to run over to Lizzy Dwight's after a risin' o' bread. Should you as lief set by yourself, or shall I get Stevens' boy to come bear you company?"

"I'm all right by myself, an' thankful to be let alone."

Whereat the widow fled to report to Lizzy Dwight that, "An ol' maid's a dreadful pernicky, aggravatin' body to live with, but there ain't one in Pettipaug can hold a candle to John Leverage when he's set out to be ugly."

John stared out over the gray, sodden land drenched in winter fog, read the county paper, stared out into the fields again, whittled a new pump pin, dropping the shavings on the floor in spite for the widow's laborious neatness, and began to wish he'd let the Stevens boy come.

"Could 'a' had a game o' checkers with him." He frowned; then, as the kitchen latch rattled: "Good George! Some neighbor to pester me!"

The door opened to show a shabby cape, a red hood, and a face all color and light and good-fellowship.

"Good afternoon, John Leverage." Lee had both his hands in hers, com-

fortingly warm for all the chill rain. "You're gettin' on handsome."

John smiled, an act not committed by him in two weeks.

"Tolerable, tolerable." Then, like an aggrieved child: "I've had a dreadful poor spell. I liked to have gone out one night."

"You tell me about it," sitting down beside him, his hand still in hers.

With the joy experienced by even the most reticent man when given a chance to talk of his diseases, John launched forth upon the pangs and perils of rheumatism, growing dramatic in the mellow warmth of her smile. She sympathized and lamented and praised—just enough—and then, casting cape and hood from her, announced:

"I got through at the Tucks'. I can put in an afternoon here just as well as not. What we do for fun? You got a deck o' cards?"

"The devil's picture books!" The whole of old New England thundered from him.

"Land!" easily. "That a checker-board? I'll beat you two out o' three games o' checkers!"

"Done!"

She could not do it—John was famed beyond the township for his playing—but she gave him a good run for it, and gained hearty laughs from him. And the widow still remained at Lizzy Dwight's.

"What you got there?" She had noted the fiddle over the mantel.

"Belonged to my grand'ther. He played it till he was 'long in the nineties."

"Give me a tune," holding it to him coaxingly.

"Can't oblige you. My music's all in my ears."

"Then I will."

She seated herself on the arm of a heavy old chair and drew the bow slowly, fondly over the strings. She picked out a few chords, slipped into a

queer, wild tune, and began to sing. The words were melancholy—"Oh, bury me not in the lone prairie"—the air minor, and the voice different from any he had ever heard. It was not so much singing as a sort of rhythmic speaking, low and sweet and indescribably moving. He saw the vast, mournful, desolate plains, the pygmy tent of man, the dying man yearning for human nearness even in the grave. He felt, deep down in a place never reached in manhood, the tears stir.

Then her voice changed and she chanted: "Oh, little dogies, won't you keep up with the herd?" till he saw that, too—the vanishing dust of the cattle train, the young steers falling ever behind. One strange, barbaric song, sorrowful or lively, followed another, while she sang on, lost to his presence, her body swaying with the swing of her bow, her eyes misty with the past. And John knew his heart slowly drawn out of his body to lie in her two hands.

Suddenly the bow fell with a twang.

"Why, why?" she cried, and rubbed her eyes as if aroused from sleep.

He gave a great sigh and dropped back into his chair.

"Where you learn those songs?" he demanded.

"Oh, when I was a girl."

"Nobody round here sings 'em."

"I lived West," briefly.

This was the first fact in her early life he had learned. "West," to long-ago Pettipaug, meant the western side of New York and Pennsylvania.

"I been in Buffalo."

"This was down on the Texas line—New Mexico an' round there."

"How in thunder did you ever get 'way back this part o' the world?" To him it sounded like the reaches of the moon.

"Oh, I'm New England born. My grandmother was an Alden an' another one a Winthrope." Suddenly her face flushed; she jumped up. "I guess the

patient's had enough company for to-day. It might excite him."

"It won't! Set down!" He made a clutch at her gown.

"Your housekeeper's a-comin' in. She'll be company for you." The laugh that floated back to him was tinged with malice.

Into the room, which seemed to swim in a sort of radiance, like liquid stars, the widow introduced her dignified, chill presence.

"Put another chunk into the stove, please, Mrs. Salt." He shivered in his quilts. Then to himself: "An' that woman's been wed twice!"

The day was a pallid, wistful one of early spring. The redwings were calling to each other in the swamps; the willows by the brook were just filming with their first green mist; the sheltered hollows of the wood showed frail blooms of windflower and hepatica. John Leverage, ax on shoulder, strode along the rutted path that led through his woods out into his lately contested and won field. This was the sort of spring he had known all his life in that corner of New England where winter lingered late, chill and lonesome, holding out in the sunshine faint promises of the sweet fires of June, withdrawing them at the first touch of twilight. Yet to-day his heart was void and lonely, with a strange homesickness he could not understand. It was like the days, long gone now, just after his mother had died, when he used to miss her suddenly when he was haying on the Great Meadows, or fishing off the Light, places where she had never been.

He swung his ax viciously at a tall bayberry bush, with the anger of a steady-nerved man at a mood he cannot place.

"These queer days o' spring give you the chills worse'n December," he muttered, and, whistling up his dog, strode on faster.

At the edge of the wood, he saw a man following the forbidden path along the fence.

"Got a little above himself, I view it, trespassin' on my land!" He was about to hail the stranger austerely when he saw him stop, look about, then lean against a post, obviously waiting for him.

"Good afternoon," he called, while John was still a distance from him. "I am lost and will thank you if you will tell me if this is the way to where I'm going."

John did not answer until he was close to the man and had given him a swift glance.

"This ain't the way to any place. It's closed land."

The stranger laughed.

"Well, then, how am I going to reach Mr. Abel Brewster's?" He had drawn out a piece of paper and read the name from it.

Again John studied him in silence. The stranger was about his own age, and nearly as tall, but slenderly made, with a narrow face and small, finely cut features. He had soft brown eyes, a vivid color like a woman's, and a light voice; yet, for all his delicacy and prettiness, there was power in his small, square chin, and wit in his dark eyes, and under all his smooth softness a something sharp and hard.

"Abel Brewster? That's way out on the Pleasant Valley Road, more'n three mile, an' rough goin', too."

"I'll risk it," impatiently. "Where'll I get a team?"

"Keep right 'long on that road there, bendin' always to your left, an' you'll come to a blue house. That's Chip Moulton's. He's got a span o' young horses that'll take you there."

The stranger was off at a quick walk.

"An' he'll charge you good an' plenty for 'em, too," John grinned after him. "But if you've got a wallet to match

those city clothes o' yours, that won't rile you."

He watched the trim figure out of sight.

"What's he want o' Abel Brewster?"

The question stirred him with an interest that did not concern an old man and woman in a remote farmstead. Lee Wheat had been nursing there for a month, and he had not seen her once in all that time. The days, with all their bustle of planting, had been queerly empty.

"You don't reckon that fellow came to see her?" he asked Tramp, whose head was pushed up close to him.

Tramp whined and licked John's hand. He knew the frown on his master's forehead meant a sharp sense of the difference between an earth-stained farmer in patched clothes and a dapper city man.

The day wore away fast; the last greenish-gold wave of sunset ebbed back behind the hills; twilight sifted down over the freshly plowed fields. John finished cutting his fence stakes in the woods, piled them for the morrow's hauling, and strode briskly home for fire and supper. As he cleared his field, he saw in the road that wound past his house two figures. The land had a sharp western slope there, showing up both figures strongly against the pale glow of the dying day. One was the stranger of the morning; the other, Lee Wheat. Without reasoning, John's strides quickened. He was out in the road just behind the figures. They were talking intensely. The man's voice rose to a high pitch. Neither one noticed him.

"I tell you I will never give in! I have got to win!" His voice was not angry, but passionate with beseeching.

In the still dusk, in which not even a bird twittered, the woman's soft, mel-low voice answered distinctly:

"An' I tell you I will never give in. I'm a different woman now, an' there's

nothin' you say matters." There was no anger in her, either; only a deep sadness.

The man shivered, drew himself together, cried out: "I will be back again soon!" and hurried away toward the village. Lee, with drooping head and lagging steps, plodded slowly along the road toward the mountain farm.

John leaned back in the angle of the fence. What was this—a brother or an old lover? Why did he pursue her so vehemently, and she refuse with so mournful a decision? And where had her humble trail crossed the broad highway of this gallant? John ate his supper in a silence as thorough as that cherished by his nephew.

One strange happening brings another—although unrelated—in its wake. Fate will have it so. Only a week after this meeting, John had just finished his dinner when a knock at his front door made him stare. Every one save the minister used the kitchen entrance, and that visitor had made his monthly call only the day before.

"Fetch him into the clock room, whoever he is," he commanded the widow, who had started for the door.

In the shining frostiness of this room of ceremony, John found a thin man, with a mean and cruel mouth and ferret eyes, a personality to raise the gorge of any honest man.

"Afternoon, sir. Have a seat," John said, not offering his hand.

"I presume this is Mr. John William Leverage?" The stranger spoke in a rather fawning voice.

"Your servant."

"I've come to this town on a little piece o' business—pretty difficult business, as you might say—an' I figgered that you, as first s'lectman an' first deacon in the church, was the man I'd do well to apply to."

John sat a figure of motionless attention. The man went on, with a more halting speech:

"I am the guardeen—the parent, as you might say—of a girl named Martha Judson."

John did not speak.

"That girl runned away from my house an' shelter—or, better, she was stole away—a matter o' four month ago, mighty nigh."

No answer yet.

"An' is now makin' her home with an abandoned woman callin' herself Lee Wheat, on a farm once the property o' Amos Bowers, this township."

"How you figgered all that out?"

"Amos Bowers' wife was own sister to my first wife. Ame sold the farm to a fellow from the city, name o' Vance. Then Ame thought better o' the sale, by which he didn't get much o' any cash, an' wanted to buy the farm back. Seems he's got a notion he can sell the ledge for a quarry. But that ain't here nor there."

"Well?"

"Ame sought out Vance, but when he'd got on his track again, he was dead, an' he'd willed the property to this woman Wheat."

John stirred, and his big hand clenched on his knee.

"Amos was just goin' to hunt her up when, if you'll believe me, she moved right here into the farm herself, comin' 'long one freezin' day last winter an' bringin' in her clutches a young girl she called Patty. Ever seen 'em?" he broke off suddenly, thrusting out his sharp face to John.

"Yes."

"Meanwhile, I'd been a-lookin' an' a-seekin' that girl Patty an' the woman everywheres I could, but I've been laid up the best part o' the winter with pleurisy, an' I didn't have no success. Along comes Amos Bowers to pay us a visit, first one in twenty year, and tells us the story. Quick as I was able to be about, I streaked it over here." He coughed raucously, as if in confirmation of his plea of illness.

"Where do I come in, sir?"

"The girl's runned away from me an' my wife, I tell you, that was father an' mother to her, an' is hidin' here."

"What she run away for, then?"

The man spread out his hands.

"You wedded? Got daughters?"

"No."

"Widower?"

"No."

"Well, you can't unravel the female character, then, an' no more can I, that's had two wives, though not blessed with children. That girl's mother willed her to us same as she would a house, an' we've cared for her an' fed an' clothed her an' educated her an' took care o' her when she was complainin'—an' she was a puny child—an' the first chance she gets she runs off with this woman. Seems like she'd put a spell on her."

"Did the girl's mother leave some money, too?"

He seemed prepared for this; his crafty eyes met John's for an instant.

"All gone long ago in doctor's trade an' clothes. I ain't a prosperous man myself."

"Where do I come in?" again.

"Why, I got to take the girl back with me, of course, an' I deemed that maybe you, from your position o' responsibility in the town an' the church, could get her to go quiet."

"Why have you got to take her back?"

The stranger broke into fury.

"Ain't she the same as my daughter? Ain't I obligated to look out for her by her mother's will? Don't I set by her like I was her father?"

"This girl, Martha, as she tells me, is now twenty-one years old. If she don't want to go with you, you can't take her back, if you were twenty-one times her father."

"She does want to go with me. I tell you the girl prizes me an' my wife. Such a hell-for-leather runnin' off as

this is would never 'a' entered her head if it hadn't been put there by that——"

The evil name died in his throat as John's hands gripped down on it.

"You don't call any woman that in my house, you hound!" He swung the man back and forth as if he had been the rat he looked.

The man's face turned from red to a horrible, blackish purple; his eyes stared; his tongue lolled from his mouth. John flung him back in his seat a limp bundle; then, in contemptuous pity, brought him a glass of water.

The man drank and gasped and found speech weakly.

"I apologize to you, cap'n. It wasn't the kind o' talk to give a church member." He tried a sickly smile. "But, say, she's a light character, an' everybody knows it where she comes from. You know about her?"

"No. I don't want to, either." Yet some of the desire to learn Lee's story weakened the threat in his voice.

"She runned off West with Charles Vance when she was just a girl."

"The man who left her the house?"

"No, no; that was his father. The old man was tryin' to kind o' make it up to her before he died. Charles Vance had a wife already, wedded to him in law, but Lee didn't make nothin' o' that. She lived with him three years. Then he got tired o' her an' quit up on her, an' she lived around with any miner or ranchman who——"

John was upon him with clenched fists.

"Shut your vile mouth!" he thundered.

The man cowered in his chair, his hands up like a begging dog.

"Now," said John, more calmly, "I'll drive you up to the farm. I deem both women are there now, an' you can put the case to the girl. If she wants to go, well an' good; an' if she doesn't, I'll break your back if you try to frighten her into goin'."



The women were taking clothes from the line, Lee gathering them up with long swirls of her arms, Patty folding them into the basket.

Out in the yard, young John was just harnessing the team.

"John," his uncle commanded, "I want you should drive this man an' me up to the mountain 'farm. I got business with the women there."

Young John rushed buckle and tongue together in short order. He ached to

know what was in the wind, but bided his time patiently. They drove in complete silence.

As they climbed the hill to the farm, they heard laughter, bits of talk, and a whistle, clear as a blackbird's. Young John flushed to his sandy hair. He knew that blackbird. The women were

taking clothes from the line, Lee gathering them up with long swirls of her arms, Patty folding them into the basket. The young girl saw them first, looked one instant, uttered a trembling cry:

"It's him! He's come for me!" And she flung herself into the other's arms.

Lee folded her close.

"Hushy, hush, little lambie! He can't touch you—can he, John?" She sent a swift, straight look at the men.

"No!" It was the voice of young John, and it ripped out like an oath.

Somehow they all got into the kitchen, and John into the chair by the table like a judge. Lee and Patty took one of the cots, clinging to each other. The man sat in the other chair. Young John stood holding onto the door.

"Tell your story," commanded John. "An' mind you don't insult any one here."

The stranger began again, with many words, in fawning accents, the recital of the will that had left Patty to him, the care and expense lavished upon her in his house, the devotion felt for her by his wife and himself, and the necessity now for her return to her own home.

"Now yours, child." John's voice was kind, and he smiled.

Trembling, gasping, the girl began:

"It ain't true—not anythin' but mother dyin' an' makin' the will. The rest is lies. -He's beaten me an' starved me an' worked me like I was an animal, an' I'll never go back with him. I'll jump into the river sooner."

"There, pettie, there!" soothed Lee.

"You can ask any o' the folks in the places where we've lived. Why, the minister came to him about how poor I was, an' the thin wisps o' clothes I wore in cold weather. An' he told him I wouldn't plump up for all the milk he gave me, an' I was almost starved out— an'——" Details of suffering, pitiful,

grotesque, disjointed, poured from her. "I'll die before I'll go back to him!"

"What you want her for?"

"Why, she's the same as a daughter——" began the man, when young John burst in:

"There's more money comin' to her when she's twenty-one, an' him an' his wife heirs it if she dies unwed."

John stared as if the table had answered him.

"We're workin' out our plans to get that money into her own hands." Lee took her turn now. "Young John's given the case to a lawyer in Middletown when he went up there on that business when you were sick." She smiled at young John.

John's mind swung away from the matter in hand to study out this comradeship between Lee and his nephew. All this worked out with never a word to him! His brows met above his hawk eyes in that ominous frown.

The stranger seemed to feel that frown augured good to him some way.

"There ain't a word o' truth in that!" he swaggered.

"Maybe there ain't," agreed John, with the mildness that always deceived the unaware, "but there's truth in this—the girl don't want to go with you, she's twenty-one year old an' her own mistress, an' she shan't go. An' if ever you come round here frightenin' her, I'll kick you out of town myself, an' then have you sent to jail for a swindler an' a beast. If you say a word more, I'll kick you *now*. John, drive him to the junction."

Little Patty lay down on the cot to weep gently and recover her wits, so fiercely blown out of her. Lee went after the clothes. John followed her.

"You come here!" he said authoritatively, and led her to the edge of the cliff where, on that first Sunday, they had talked together. "Sit down a while."

They seated themselves against a boulder warmed by the noon sun.

"Lee," John began, very slowly and steadily, "that man told me an ugly story."

"About me?"

"Yes. You know what it is?"

Her eyes turned from the river and the valley to look straight into his, those star-bright eyes.

"He said I ran off with Charles Vance when he had a wife, an' when he left me, I went round with the boys out West just anyhow?"

"Yes."

Her eyes never flinched.

"I did go out West with Charles when he had a wife, an' I did live out there with the boys. What you say now?"

"I say you're a *good* woman an' always were a good woman, an' I won't believe otherwise, not if you tell me yourself."

Lee's impassive face quivered; her eyes blurred with tears. She took his hand.

"Listen, friend. I will tell you, because you trusted me. When I was sixteen, my father died an' left me without a relative on earth or a penny in the world; out in Ohio it was. I got work in a store. Charles Vance worked there, too, an' he was ten year older than I an' handsome an' sweet — You saw him!"

"Hm! That fellow last week?"

"Yes. He's come back for me now he's free. His wife's been dead a year."

"You won't go?" It was a cry. He wrung her hand in his.

Lee's face sank into profound sadness.

"No, friend, I couldn't go with him now. He's not the man I thought I knew, an' I'm not what I was then. I was seventeen when I went West with him, the most innocent little girl you ever dreamed of. Why, Patty, here,

knows more. He wedded me fair an' right, with a ring an' a minister."

"I *knew* it!" It burst from him in a great sigh.

"We trailed around three years—Southern California, New Mexico, Texas. Then she came, his real wife, wedded before he ever heard o' me. Well, she was a silly, selfish girl. A man like him might tire of her. She'd found him an' she forgave him an' they went back East together."

"Did he leave you without any money?"

"Would I take his *money* when I had lost *him*?"

"No. Go on."

"I couldn't die—I was so wonderfully young an' strong—so I started in to earn my livin'. I cooked for the miners, an' nursed 'em an' the cowboys, an' set up an eatin' house in a town, an' sewed an' played the fiddle at dances— Why, sometimes I made money over an' above what I needed. An' all the time I was a *good* woman—like your mother."

"Yes, oh, yes!"

"'Twas a rough life, but I loved it, an' by an' by I forgot, an' grew happy again. An', oh, how good folks were to me, women an' men! Bad men, sometimes, too."

"I'll bet they were!"

"It's so big an' free out there!" She drew her hand from his and swept it wide over the valley. "An' there is such a need for help, an' big folks, too. My, I loved it! I'd be there now if it hadn't been the ranch boss, where I worked, lost his wife, an' he wanted to send his little, tiny baby East to his mother. I said I'd bring it 'way back here to this State, right in the neighborhood where I was born, over beyond the mountain."

Their eyes turned to the dark hills that ringed this little valley from the world.

"I stayed a while tryin' to find if any

folks remembered mother an' father, but they didn't. They left home when I was just a baby child, an' you see I don't bear my own name."

"Not Lee——"

"I was called after mother—Mary Lee Wheat. Brayton's father's name. But when Charles—when I was all alone out on the frontier, I didn't want folks back home ever to hear o' me again, an' so I just snipped off two ends o' my name."

"Mary?" John mused. "That's a proper, sweet name for a woman. 'Twas my mother's, too, an' young John's mother's, my sister-in-law's."

Lee flowed on smoothly with her story, her voice a melancholy cadence:

"I had my plans laid to go West an' end my days among them that had been kind to me, an' then a queer thing happened. His father died an' left me this farmstead here."

"He know you?"

"Not till it came to be his dying day. Charles honored his father more'n he did any bein' on earth. I guess he couldn't bear the thought o' him goin' into the next world without tellin' him that pitiful story. The old man wrote me a letter, sayin' how now he knew an' was grief-stricken an' was doin' what he could for me, givin' me this farm that he deemed could be sold for a quarry an' maybe make me a rich woman."

"Did that fellow know about the farm?" John would not speak the name he scorned.

"Oh, yes! So I journeyed 'long over here to see how the place looked. I'd never owned an inch o' land myself, an' I thought it would be kind o' pleasant to set my foot on my own earth, some way, an' sleep in my own house. But I stopped to the Parrys—they're the grandparents o' the baby I told you 'bout—an' the baby was sick, an' I stayed to nurse it. Then Patty was next door. It took me just four days

to see the child was bein' killed right in her tracks. If you could 'a' been there an' viewed what I did!"

"I'm almighty thankful I didn't! That guardian o' hers ought to be, too."

Lee's sadness dropped from her like a garment.

"I guess so! I told you 'bout the rest. I just tucked Patty under my arm, gathered in a few oddments o' gear Mrs. Parry loaned, an' hiked out hotfoot over here. An' here I've kind o' tarried."

John's peering gaze was on her.

"That's a strange an' a sad story," pityingly.

"You mustn't think 'twas all sorrowful, John." She laid a warm hand on his knee. "I've been blessed with more'n many women—the wonderfulest health—why, I don't know what sick *means*!—an' faithful friends an' queer, excitin' adventures, an' fun till you couldn't measure it, an' then——" Her face was all sheer beauty; the sun in her hair glowed and shone. "I didn't start my life wrong—not in my heart I didn't. I believed it was an honest union, an' so I ain't got remorse to eat out my soul."

John took the hand on his knee into both of his, holding it close. He knew just what he wanted to say, only he didn't want to tumble his words out like a schoolboy.

"Lee," he began slowly, "it's like this with me——"

"Lee! Lee! Where you got to?" Around the curve of the rock Patty's little, tear-washed face stared at them.

Lee rose tranquilly.

"I'm a-goin' back now. You wait up here for young John?"

John knew his time vanished.

"I'll mog along home," grumpily. "See you 'gain soon."

As he swung down the hill, he wondered if he really did want to say what Patty had prevented him. Lee was a queer fashion of woman, half gypsy,

and tarred with a different stick, in her years of roving, from the sound, home-keeping women his raising had trained him to prize. Her clothes were outlandish certainly, and she had a bold, free way with her that made him jump.

Then, athwart these prudent counselings flamed the image of Lee herself—her beauty, her wit, her courage, and that something beyond them all which was like the very fire of life itself, which made the hours with her glow and tingle and sing, as long ago in his vivid young manhood. She gave him back the ardor of his youth and yet deepened the peace of his middle years.

He smote the palm of one hand with the fist of the other.

"I'll do it!"

That settled, he strode into the barn with the purpose of a man who has already lost precious hours of his day, and set to work mending a harrow that had broken in the thick of its service.

Young John drove into the barn and began to unharness his horses.

"See that skunk safe off to the junction?" his uncle called genially.

The other nodded and led out the horses.

"As mean as they grow 'em." Young John was back now.

Again the young man nodded. In a moment his uncle was aware of him standing close, his hands behind his back, curiously like a child about to beg a boon that he fears will be denied.

"Well?" Old John was still amiable.

Young John spoke thickly, but without a halt, and with all the force of silence long pent up.

"I'd like to ask you, sir, to make some kind of a bargain with me for reg'lar wages, same as men o' my age get every place when they do my work. You've give me food an' lodgin' an' clothes an' now an' again a sum o' money to spend—birthdays an' like that. But *now* I want steady wages." He mopped his forehead as if it were July.

Old John caught at the stressed word. "What's set you a-goin' on this turrang to-day? You never so much as hinted at this afore."

"I want to know where I stand. I want to be able to look ahead."

"Why, for the matter o' that, Johnny, I've made you heir to all I own, lock, stock, an' barrel. The will's down in judge's safe."

"It ain't that I mean. I want to be content I got enough to provide for my family right now."

"Family?" shouted John. "Are you crazy, boy?"

Young John's face was bathed in moisture, but he never flinched.

"I want to be wedded, sir, an' bring my—her—to this house, where she'll feel she's not livin' on your bounty, but on my earnin's."

"Who you goin' to wed, son?" John's voice was down to a whisper.

Young John's will broke.

"You know—you've seen us two together——" He stammered. "There ain't ever any girl moved me but just her—— Her—courage—that night—an' her sweetness, an' the hard life she's had. Why—I *got* to prize her! I couldn't help it if I would."

"You considered the difference between your ages?" John's voice was like ice.

"It ain't but a matter o' ten year," wonderingly.

"You view 't she sets by you, too?" Each word was dragged out of him.

Young John faced him with a glorious candor.

"I know it. We're tokened, an' I gave her mother's ring."

"A'mighty Jesse! You've been spry. An' now, if I may ask it, what you a-goin' to do, you an' your tokenin's an' your rings, if I don't hire you at day wages?"

The hot face paled.

"I don't know, sir. There ain't a

man in the township needs steady help. I believed you'd take it right, seein' I'm a man now. Lee said not to be afeard o' you; she'd trust your sense o' fairness."

The veins in John's forehead stood out thickly.

"You can stay here an' work for me an' live with me under the terms you have been livin', or you can go to Halifax!" he thundered.

Young John actually staggered. Accustomed all his life to docile obedience to this masterful man, he was unready for rebellion; he could only walk out of the barn, dazed, anguished.

John plunged out of it, too, but in another direction. He felt as if every part of him, inside and out, was a raging furnace of fire and he must get near the river breezes.

In his whole life John Leverage had never desired that which he had not won. Hard fights, wounds dealt, scars on his own body, neighbors estranged, old ties sundered—oh, yes; but he had always gained his end. And now this thing that he panted for as if he were bodily athirst to be snatched from him by his own blood kin, the child that he had reared from babyhood with a father's love! It was monstrous! He ground his teeth.

"Farms that offer a good-wages place to a man ain't very plenty in this county. He'll have to search a pretty while an' work another to earn enough for just their keep, him that's been wonted to every comfort."

He tramped on, crushing under his boots the tender spring blooms of the river's edge.

"He shan't have things soft for his settin' out! He'll have to sweat for it, an' maybe work years!" He squeezed a drop of cruel comfort from this.

Lee's face came and went before his red-blurred vision, strong and serene and bright. When he shut his eyes, it shone golden clear before him, and the

reeds of the river rustled the sweet cadence of her voice.

John Leverage, who could buy and sell the judge—or, for the matter of that, any man in Pettipaug—twice over, and who had had his way with every one since his childhood, to be blocked by a *boy* and a *woman*! He stamped in the boggy pools of the margin.

The gentlest of spring nights, all mystery and poetry and moonlight, had drifted down tenderly upon hill and valley when John Leverage, haggard, mud-splashed, and weary-eyed, lagged up the lane to the mountain farm. Tomorrow he would tell young John. Tonight he must talk to Lee once more, to get first from her his thanks. He was utterly weary and endlessly sad, yet his heart felt strangely soft and gentle and tender, as if the years of his domineering manhood had never been and he were just a little boy.

She was standing by the rock by which they had talked that day, almost as if she were waiting for him. In the silvery light he could see her little, tranquil smile.

"Mary"—he saw her start at the name—"young John's been telling me his hopes an' plans to-day, an' how he'd tokened himself with his dead mother's ring—another Mary's ring. He wanted me to set him goin' for himself, so he could wed right off. But I answered him harsh. I—I told him no."

"Why, John, what you do *that* for?" She drew close to him so that her breath was on his cheek.

"Because I wanted you myself, Mary dear. I—I love you!" The great word came from the depth of his nature, the blood of his heart on it. "I couldn't give you up—not at first. I—I want you to know—it's pretty nigh broke me down, but now I am ready to do it."

She made a queer little sound, and her hand went up to touch his cheek.

"I've fought it all out, walkin' miles

beyond here, an' it ain't my happiness that's the one I long for most—it's yours, dear, it's yours. And so I'm a-goin' to give Johnny the Blassett farm I bought last year, an' stock it with all that's needful for a good set-out, an' you an' him can have the banns read out on Sunday."

Lee laughed out a tiny laugh with a catch in it. She pulled him forward along the road.

"Look there!"

John's eyes followed her pointing hand. By the farm gate, he saw the figures of a man and a woman, his arm around her waist, her head on his shoulder, and in the sweet silence he heard Patty's little, light voice chime out:

"Now, Johnny, dear!"

Lee, still laughing tremulously, stepped back behind the rock.

"It's been so since the very first night he ever saw her."

But John covered his face with his hands, and the tears, unshed since boyhood, crept through his fingers.

Lee drew away his hands gently. She smiled up at him, although now her eyes, too, were full of tears.

"Mary?" He looked down into those eyes, striving for the meaning behind the tears.

"He's just a boy to me—young John. I want——"

He finished with his cheek against hers: "Old John?"



When it is Done

WHEN it is done—

Our love and our regretting,
Our bitterness,
Our half forgetting—

Love me a moment sometimes in your musing.
This is too small a boon for your refusing.

When it is past—

The dreaming and the yearning—
And in our hearts

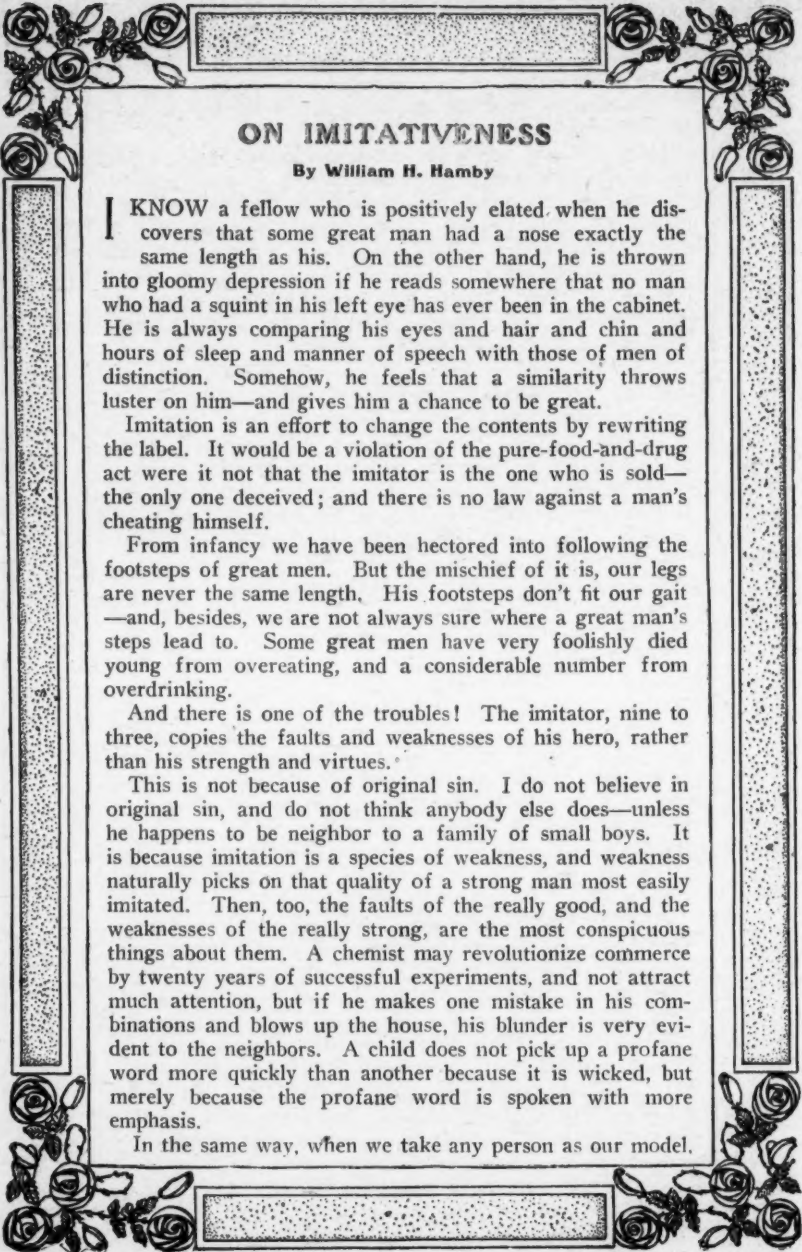
The fires have all ceased burning,
Love me once more, then, in some quiet fashion,
The while you sit and smile at our old passion.

No! Quite forget!

When roses go, 'tis better
To cast the thorns away.

Keep, then, no fetter.
And if some far-off day my name you hear,
May it sound strange and foreign to your ear.

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.



ON IMITATIVENESS

By William H. Hamby

I KNOW a fellow who is positively elated when he discovers that some great man had a nose exactly the same length as his. On the other hand, he is thrown into gloomy depression if he reads somewhere that no man who had a squint in his left eye has ever been in the cabinet. He is always comparing his eyes and hair and chin and hours of sleep and manner of speech with those of men of distinction. Somehow, he feels that a similarity throws luster on him—and gives him a chance to be great.

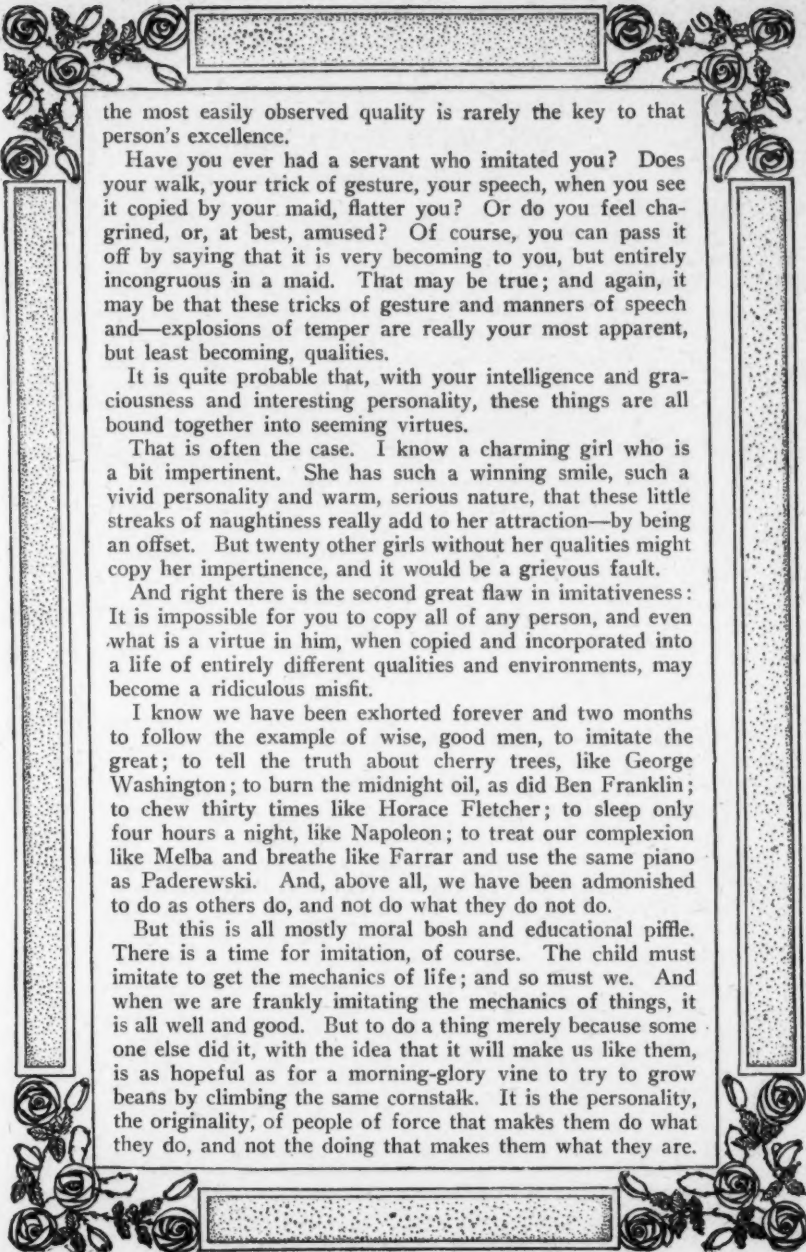
Imitation is an effort to change the contents by rewriting the label. It would be a violation of the pure-food-and-drug act were it not that the imitator is the one who is sold—the only one deceived; and there is no law against a man's cheating himself.

From infancy we have been hectored into following the footsteps of great men. But the mischief of it is, our legs are never the same length. His footsteps don't fit our gait—and, besides, we are not always sure where a great man's steps lead to. Some great men have very foolishly died young from overeating, and a considerable number from overdrinking.

And there is one of the troubles! The imitator, nine to three, copies the faults and weaknesses of his hero, rather than his strength and virtues.

This is not because of original sin. I do not believe in original sin, and do not think anybody else does—unless he happens to be neighbor to a family of small boys. It is because imitation is a species of weakness, and weakness naturally picks on that quality of a strong man most easily imitated. Then, too, the faults of the really good, and the weaknesses of the really strong, are the most conspicuous things about them. A chemist may revolutionize commerce by twenty years of successful experiments, and not attract much attention, but if he makes one mistake in his combinations and blows up the house, his blunder is very evident to the neighbors. A child does not pick up a profane word more quickly than another because it is wicked, but merely because the profane word is spoken with more emphasis.

In the same way, when we take any person as our model,



the most easily observed quality is rarely the key to that person's excellence.

Have you ever had a servant who imitated you? Does your walk, your trick of gesture, your speech, when you see it copied by your maid, flatter you? Or do you feel chagrined, or, at best, amused? Of course, you can pass it off by saying that it is very becoming to you, but entirely incongruous in a maid. That may be true; and again, it may be that these tricks of gesture and manners of speech and—explosions of temper are really your most apparent, but least becoming, qualities.

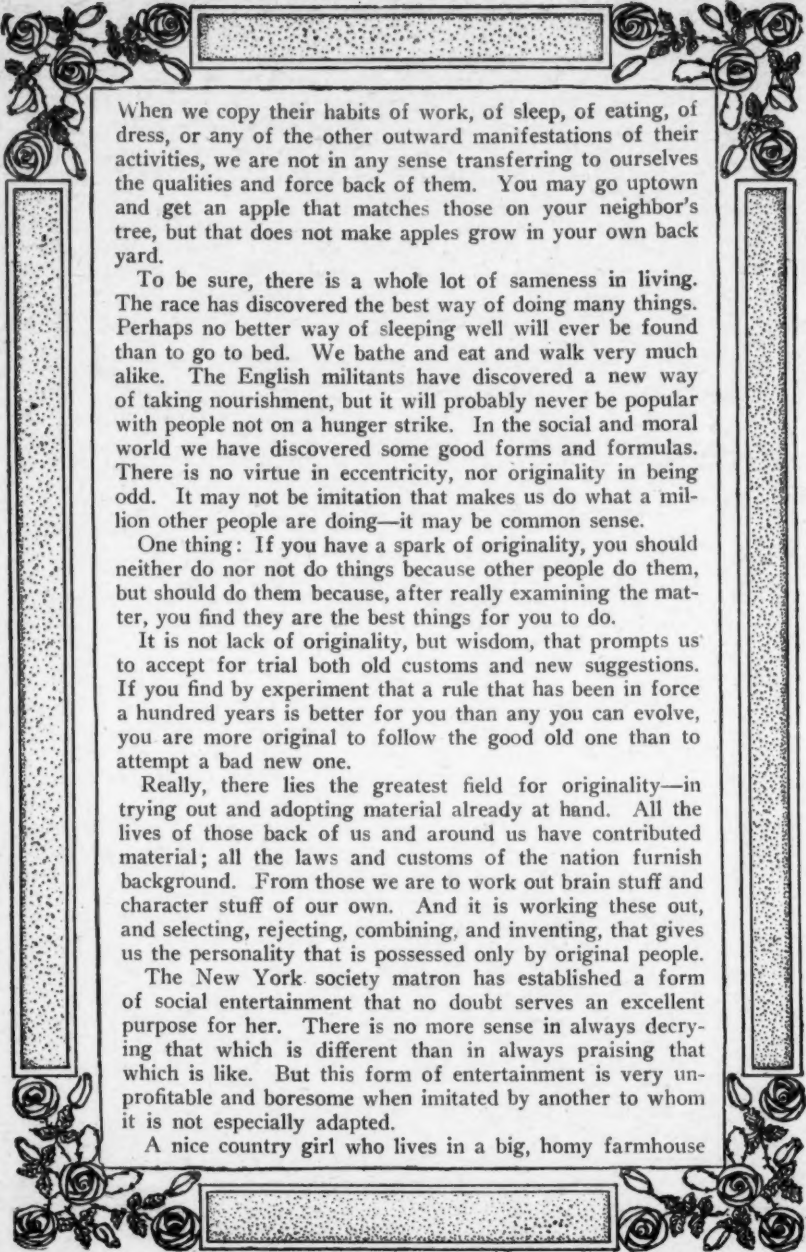
It is quite probable that, with your intelligence and graciousness and interesting personality, these things are all bound together into seeming virtues.

That is often the case. I know a charming girl who is a bit impertinent. She has such a winning smile, such a vivid personality and warm, serious nature, that these little streaks of naughtiness really add to her attraction—by being an offset. But twenty other girls without her qualities might copy her impertinence, and it would be a grievous fault.

And right there is the second great flaw in imitativeness: It is impossible for you to copy all of any person, and even what is a virtue in him, when copied and incorporated into a life of entirely different qualities and environments, may become a ridiculous misfit.

I know we have been exhorted forever and two months to follow the example of wise, good men, to imitate the great; to tell the truth about cherry trees, like George Washington; to burn the midnight oil, as did Ben Franklin; to chew thirty times like Horace Fletcher; to sleep only four hours a night, like Napoleon; to treat our complexion like Melba and breathe like Farrar and use the same piano as Paderewski. And, above all, we have been admonished to do as others do, and not do what they do not do.

But this is all mostly moral bosh and educational piffle. There is a time for imitation, of course. The child must imitate to get the mechanics of life; and so must we. And when we are frankly imitating the mechanics of things, it is all well and good. But to do a thing merely because some one else did it, with the idea that it will make us like them, is as hopeful as for a morning-glory vine to try to grow beans by climbing the same cornstalk. It is the personality, the originality, of people of force that makes them do what they do, and not the doing that makes them what they are.



When we copy their habits of work, of sleep, of eating, of dress, or any of the other outward manifestations of their activities, we are not in any sense transferring to ourselves the qualities and force back of them. You may go uptown and get an apple that matches those on your neighbor's tree, but that does not make apples grow in your own back yard.

To be sure, there is a whole lot of sameness in living. The race has discovered the best way of doing many things. Perhaps no better way of sleeping well will ever be found than to go to bed. We bathe and eat and walk very much alike. The English militants have discovered a new way of taking nourishment, but it will probably never be popular with people not on a hunger strike. In the social and moral world we have discovered some good forms and formulas. There is no virtue in eccentricity, nor originality in being odd. It may not be imitation that makes us do what a million other people are doing—it may be common sense.

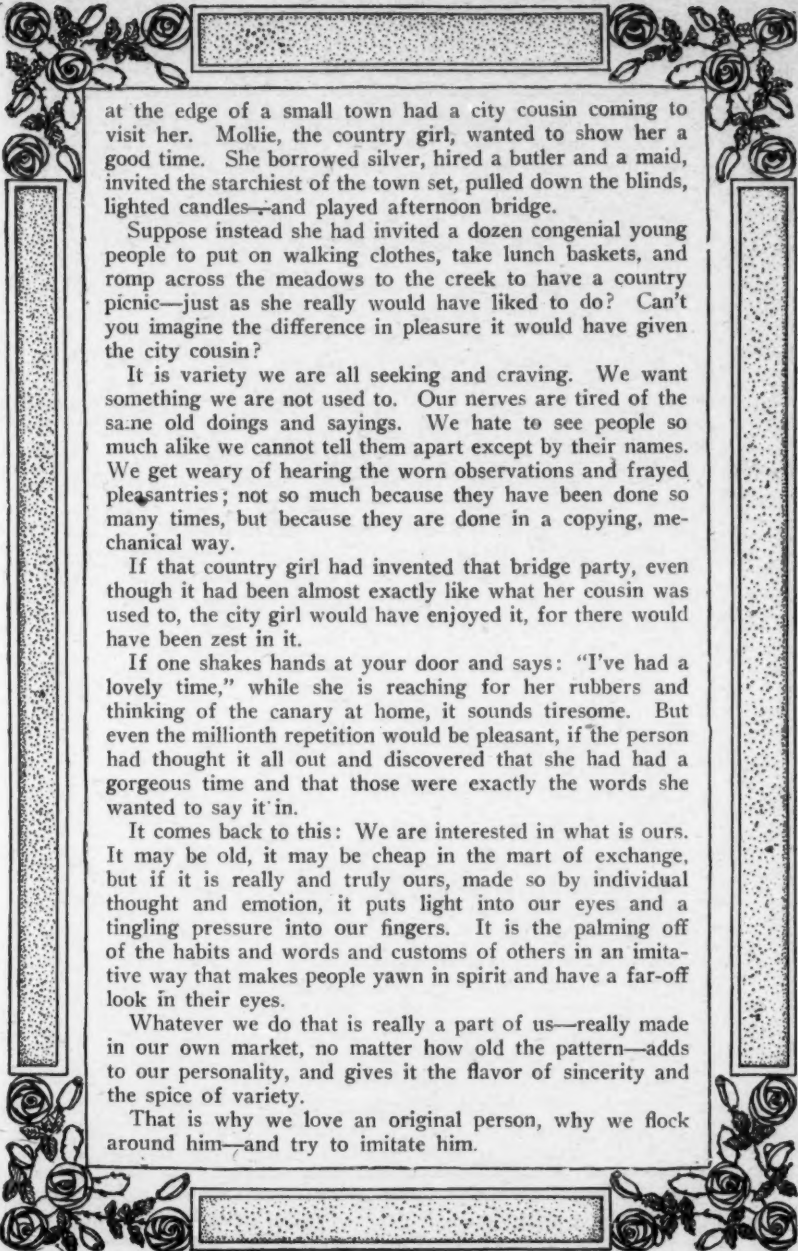
One thing: If you have a spark of originality, you should neither do nor not do things because other people do them, but should do them because, after really examining the matter, you find they are the best things for you to do.

It is not lack of originality, but wisdom, that prompts us to accept for trial both old customs and new suggestions. If you find by experiment that a rule that has been in force a hundred years is better for you than any you can evolve, you are more original to follow the good old one than to attempt a bad new one.

Really, there lies the greatest field for originality—in trying out and adopting material already at hand. All the lives of those back of us and around us have contributed material; all the laws and customs of the nation furnish background. From those we are to work out brain stuff and character stuff of our own. And it is working these out, and selecting, rejecting, combining, and inventing, that gives us the personality that is possessed only by original people.

The New York society matron has established a form of social entertainment that no doubt serves an excellent purpose for her. There is no more sense in always decrying that which is different than in always praising that which is like. But this form of entertainment is very unprofitable and boring when imitated by another to whom it is not especially adapted.

A nice country girl who lives in a big, homy farmhouse



at the edge of a small town had a city cousin coming to visit her. Mollie, the country girl, wanted to show her a good time. She borrowed silver, hired a butler and a maid, invited the starchiest of the town set, pulled down the blinds, lighted candles—and played afternoon bridge.

Suppose instead she had invited a dozen congenial young people to put on walking clothes, take lunch baskets, and romp across the meadows to the creek to have a country picnic—just as she really would have liked to do? Can't you imagine the difference in pleasure it would have given the city cousin?

It is variety we are all seeking and craving. We want something we are not used to. Our nerves are tired of the same old doings and sayings. We hate to see people so much alike we cannot tell them apart except by their names. We get weary of hearing the worn observations and frayed pleasantries; not so much because they have been done so many times, but because they are done in a copying, mechanical way.

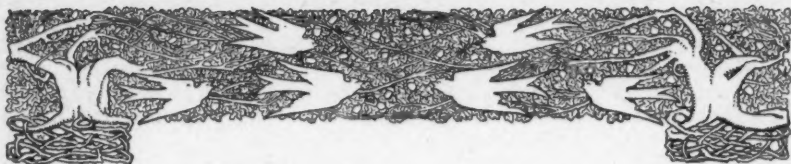
If that country girl had invented that bridge party, even though it had been almost exactly like what her cousin was used to, the city girl would have enjoyed it, for there would have been zest in it.

If one shakes hands at your door and says: "I've had a lovely time," while she is reaching for her rubbers and thinking of the canary at home, it sounds tiresome. But even the millionth repetition would be pleasant, if the person had thought it all out and discovered that she had had a gorgeous time and that those were exactly the words she wanted to say it in.

It comes back to this: We are interested in what is ours. It may be old, it may be cheap in the mart of exchange, but if it is really and truly ours, made so by individual thought and emotion, it puts light into our eyes and a tingling pressure into our fingers. It is the palming off of the habits and words and customs of others in an imitative way that makes people yawn in spirit and have a far-off look in their eyes.

Whatever we do that is really a part of us—really made in our own market, no matter how old the pattern—adds to our personality, and gives it the flavor of sincerity and the spice of variety.

That is why we love an original person, why we flock around him—and try to imitate him.



Make - Up

By Ruth Kauffman

Author of "The Second Manner of Arthur John Kirke," "One of Edward's Jokes," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

HALF a dozen young women in long college gowfs of black, which nearly covered their dresses, stood under the arch of Carnegie West Dormitories and talked together in low voices. Occasionally one or another would detach herself from the mass to obtain a view of a doorway, a hundred yards off, in the main hall.

Then, without a word of explanation, the six young women finally clasped their hands, or seized one another's shoulders, as if in extreme anticipation, and stopped their talk. A youthful figure had leaped down the steps of the farther building, and, her hair blowing, her college gown flapping like black wings above her arms, was running lightly across the intervening campus, avoiding the paths.

"It's all right!" the girl exclaimed, as she fell into their circle, breathless. "It's all right. I had to wait because Dean Carter was in conference with the ancient-language profs. But she's said 'yes'—and it's perfectly arranged."

"Ernestine!" every one exclaimed. "What a triumph!"

"How glorious!"

"*Magnifique! Comme c'est magnifique!*"

"What a lesson for '1917'!"

"Shshsh!" a tall, bony girl with a

heavy forehead warned. "There's no use telling the entire sophomore class. They'll know soon enough. How long will she stay?"

Ernestine Witherspoon's tousled blond head disappeared into the very center of the group, and Ernestine spoke in a whisper:

"Only the afternoon, because she mustn't interfere with classes or study hours. She's to be here for dress rehearsal. That's the most Dean Carter would permit. She would have let her come a second time except for the German orals on Wednesday; nobody must interfere with them, of course. She—I mean the actress—is understudy to Miss Barrystarr herself, and Dean Carter chose her because she looked so—so refined. Dean Carter didn't say that, but one of her secretaries told me, and Miss Barrystarr said she was sure she didn't smoke cigarettes"—there was a murmur as of disappointment—"and she could highly recommend her for her stage technique."

"If Miss Coyt heard that paragraph," said Janet Lygatt, the tall girl with the heavy forehead, who was the freshman class poet, "she'd slay you for ambiguous pronouns."

But Ernestine only smiled radiantly.

"I don't care," she defied. "It's too

wonderful to think that a real actress is going to come here."

"Come to my room," said Peggy Herr, a pretty little girl with a child-like face and deep, intellectual eyes. "It's perfectly absurd to invite 1917 to listen to our plans."

The seven girls filed up the stone steps and through the ivy-covered doorway of Carnegie West Dormitories. They entered what was one of the prettiest of the freshmen's rooms, Peggy Herr's, rather larger than many of the single rooms on the ground floor, and, contrary to the rule, facing the road instead of the campus. The bed was disguised as a luxurious couch with heaps of cushions, labeled "Columbia" in bold letters of pale blue, "Yale" in navy, and "Harvard" in crimson. "Barnard" and "Vassar" peeped out of the pile, and an orange tiger showed his teeth. There was a huge tiger skin on the floor. A small tea table, cluttered with cups and saucers and paper bags of chocolates and cakes, stood somewhat to one side, so that it would not be upset. In a good light, a desk held neatly arranged papers, pens and ink, and several folded sheets of foolscap with close writing on them. Bookshelves were filled with works on trigonometry and higher algebra, which were thick and imposing in juxtaposition with Shelley's poems and Pater's "Child in the House." Beneath the three mullioned windows stretched an informal window seat, deeply cushioned. And bright-colored college flags and photographs of college scenes concealed the walls. Conspicuously set above the desk was a large framed photograph of the actress, Miss Barrystarr, affectionately signed by that famous lady, though it was certain that the present owner of the treasure had never ventured farther into Miss Barrystarr's confidence than an envelope can carry.

The girls threw themselves in lolling positions on the bed and window seat

and cross-legged on cushions on the floor. The poet perched herself on the window ledge and swung her feet under her academic gown. A huge girl rapped on the tea table for order and rattled the dishes.

There was anthithesis in every one of them. The ordered hours of their lives gave them a reserve of dignity; their black gowns, their surroundings of quiet gray buildings, ivy-clad, the proximity of dog-eared books and closely written themes, betokened students whose years totaled discretion. Yet, since they were only about eighteen years old, the dignity of a college education did not sit heavily upon them; their flying hair, their disregard of clothes, their superabundance of enthusiasm and physical energy, above all their natural manners and freedom of posture and expression—these were the emblems of unrestraint. Their eyes, generally serious and often with a look of concentration, could, without warning, laugh like the eyes of young children and open with the curiosity of untouched innocence. Except for an unmistakable effort toward cleverness and the use of unintelligible class phrases in their talk, there was no affectation of any sort about them.

"Order!" called the huge girl at the tea table.

Within a week, the freshman class play was to be given, and it had indeed been a triumph for the freshman class to secure permission to have an experienced actress come for an afternoon and give what suggestions were possible in so short a time.

There was now the question of the lady's entertainment, and it was, after much discussion, considered best not to curtail the coaching by giving her tea, but to invite her to dinner with the entire class. Besides, this would be the greater triumph, as she would thus be on view to the sophomores.

The privilege of obtaining her had



"Can you tell me where I can get a taxi?" asked a very young voice.

been too great to permit of the girls asking too many questions; they could only surmise. Not one of the freshmen had ever yet, to her knowledge, seen an actress off the stage, and all that the class actually knew of this actress was that her name was Montagu and that she was the understudy of a popular star safely devoted to Shakespeare. She came with the somehow doubtful recommendation of not smoking cigarettes.

They settled at last that Peggy Herr's room should be used as headquarters, both because it was convenient and because it was pretty. A delegation of four of the 1918 girls was to go to the station with a large bunch of buttercups, and, after a formal speech of welcome from Janet Lygatt—presenting the buttercups—would escort the actress from the station to Byrnmeadow College.

The play was to be in rehearsal in

the gymnasium when the lady should arrive, and, after taking off her hat and coat, she would be conducted there. Once her work was over, the freshman class was to escort her back to Peggy's room, across the campus, singing the freshman song of victory. A seat was reserved for her in the dining hall. When she should leave for the eight-o'clock train, they were to assemble at the gates and give her three class cheers.

When the portentous afternoon arrived, the two-o'clock train was impatiently awaited. In Peggy's room, there were expectant whispers; at the station, the four members of the delegation stood in a solemn row, though their hearts beat with excitement. There was no means of recognizing Miss Montagu except by her name and the fact that Dean Carter had approved of her. The girls, however, had an idea that her skin would be rather like parchment—all actresses had the reputation of looking unwholesome in sunlight—and that, as Miss Barrystarr's understudy, she would be about thirty years old.

"She'll probably wear expensive furs," said Henrietta Gaylord.

"With a sable coat," said another member of the reception committee.

"And," declared the class poet, "we shall be able to identify her by her air of knowing life."

Within the walls of Byrnmeadow College, it was only at times like this, when some one was admitted from far outside, that the students sometimes wondered if they really "knew life." Now they mostly had a feeling of slumming being done—with them in a strange way as the slums—and they were doubtful whether they altogether liked it.

They were still wondering—each in her own heart—what their pose should be. Must they admire? Ought they to be high-minded and a little supercilious?

Should they keep up their academic straining toward epigram, or would their superiority in learning merely embarrass the actress?

But the two-o'clock train brought disappointment. It deposited only four people on the platform—three men and a young girl of about sixteen, with a fresh complexion and two thick red braids that reached to her knees, a short Norfolk suit, and a blue tam-o'-shanter; these unassociated four and a pile of luggage.

The delegation turned disconsolately away. There was a train at three, but an hour made a great difference. She had missed her train.

"Can you tell me where I can get a taxi?" asked a very young voice.

The delegation wheeled about. The little girl from the train was speaking. Janet Lygatt, the buttercups pressed tightly in her two hands, looked at the traveler in amazement.

"A taxicab? A taxicab in Byrnmeadow?"

"Yes," the girl replied. "I am Miss Angela Montagu, and—"

The four young women stared. Their eyes did not credit their ears. They looked up and down the girl's straight young figure, from her tilted tam to her square-toed boots.

"But," exclaimed Henrietta, "it's impossible! *We* are to meet Miss Montagu, and she's missed her train. Miss Montagu is the name of Miss Barrystarr's understudy, who is to come and coach us. But *you* are not Miss Montagu, are you?"

"I should worry," said the girl, with a Bowery accent and a smile so wonderful that, in spite of the accent, it brought smiles in response.

"Then Miss Barrystarr has selected *you* to come to coach us, and Dean Carter chose *you*?" They did not mean to be rude, but the situation was beyond them.



She transformed her very features, even to the making of a frown between her eyes.

The little girl said merely:

"Then, if you are looking after me, would you mind getting me something to carry my trunks to Byrnmeadow College?"

Trunks!

"But we thought you were here for only the afternoon!"

"Certainly," Miss Montagu assented. "But no one explained to me what sort of a rôle I had to play, and I couldn't

come unprepared. Besides, I always travel with trunks."

They pried a slumbering porter from the baggage room and induced him to assemble the luggage on a cart and push it all the way to Carnegie West—a steamer trunk, a wardrobe trunk with bulging sides, a hatbox, and a suit case. Then, timidly, they invited him to return for it in time for the eight-o'clock train.

"Is—is it jes' fo' exercise, missies?" he queried, and none of the delegation even smiled.

After she had convinced herself that her baggage was safely following, Miss Angela Montagu demurely walked beside a member of the delegation. The three other girls trod silently behind. They were a trifle scornful, and their scorn was no mannerism; they were very much under the impression that the sophomore class had mysteriously brought about this catastrophe. Gloomily they fixed their eyes on the small, straight figure, the two red braids, the tam-o'-shanter, the short skirts, and the almost infantile walk of Miss Barrystarr's understudy. Janet still unconsciously carried the buttercups, and finally dared to whisper her darkest fears:

"I believe she's only a chorus girl."

Henrietta Gaylord, who walked beside the actress, was much pitied. Moreover, Miss Montagu's manner had inexplicably altered. Attempts at conversation were met by a shy "yes" or "no." Miss Montagu's interest did not awaken to the asking of a question until the college buildings rose well within sight and were proudly pointed to by her guide. Then a look of naïve concern crossed her face, and she became childishly inquisitive.

"You have so many buildings and grass, and you are a quite grown woman. What do you do with all your time here?"

"Do?" Henrietta was mildly amused. "We attend lectures and play basket ball and field hockey, and have class plays like this one——"

"What sort of lectures?"

"Oh, lectures in whatever courses we are taking. Some of us go in for languages—Greek and Latin if it's a classical course, or French, German, and Spanish if we care about modern languages. I'm more interested in the classics myself and incline to agree with

Professor Mahaffey that this trend toward modernism makes you neglect the wonderful literature of the Greeks and leaves your old age empty, with no beautiful storehouse of Greek to make explorations in. Of course, I put it badly."

"So you just go to lectures, one after another?"

"Not exactly. We have fifteen hours of lectures in the week, and we're supposed to devote two hours' study to each lecture afterward. But we don't. Most of us wait until the mid-years, I'm sorry to say, and cram for them."

"I don't think I understand," said Angela.

Henrietta Gaylord tried to be clear.

"Mid-years," she said, "are exams, and when they're going to be held, you study all night, for several nights. It's not approved of at all, but there are so many other things to do that we always postpone work until the last minute."

"You mean class plays?"

"Yes, and tennis and walks and gym work. And then we cook sometimes—candy and chocolate and even serious things like scrambled eggs and omelets."

"I see," said Angela. "But is that all you do?"

"To be sure," said her companion, beginning to flush, "our work does take up most of our time. We have to write a daily theme, and just now we have to write a sonnet, which is rather troublesome because not every subject is suited to the sonnet form. Then there's Greek composition, which is really very hard; and we have to translate several pages of Sophocles a day at present. The scientific girls are always fussing with their practical work in lab, and a good many of the freshmen are volunteering in an experiment in psychology about German script——"

"Script?" Angela's eyes brightened. "You mean you learn German plays?"

"Oh, no!" said Miss Gaylord. "It's a test in psychology. It's to see how

soon by this new method we can learn to write in German script—I mean that funny German handwriting, you know.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen German handwriting,” Angela confessed.

They were talking very much at cross-purposes. They were also approaching the arched entrance gate to the college.

Heads peeped out of Peggy Herr’s windows as the delegation with their prize came within view. There was no comment made inside the room except a faint “Oh!” as the waiting girls caught sight of the person with the red braids, the delegate with the drooping buttercups, and the porter with the trunks. Here, indeed, came the unexpected. Unable to face it, the girls, one by one, deserted their hostess. The delegation, entering, were icily polite.

“Peggy, dear,” said one of them sympathetically, “perhaps Miss—er—Montagu would like to take off her things before coming to gym. That’s where we’re rehearsing, Miss Montagu.”

“Yes,” said the girl, without obvious concern at the general embarrassment. “I will change. Have you the script?”

There was a flurry. “Script”—not German script—was interpreted, and the book of the play produced.

“Put it there,” said the little girl. “I’ll be ready in half an hour. No,” she said, as the porter arranged her baggage, “don’t leave them on top of each other! How in the world do you think I’m going to open them if they’re on top of each other? There’s not much room here, but I guess it’ll do. Will somebody please get me a maid?”

“I’m sorry,” said Peggy, in a small, scared voice. “I don’t think we can find one at this time of day. Do you really need one?”

“Oh, it’s all right,” said Angela. “I’ll manage somehow. One of you’ll maybe help me hook up. I’ve been up against

all sorts of queer propositions. One-night stands, you know.”

She began to unpack her trunks, and the delegation and Peggy stood watching her, fascinated.

“You can stay if you want,” said Angela Montagu, handing a gorgeous evening gown with yellow spangles to Peggy. “I’m sure I don’t mind.” She saw actual fright in their faces. “Say, kids,” she tried to reassure them, “you’re not *afraid* of me, are you?” Her voice burst into a delighted laugh.

“Aren’t you very young to be on the stage?” Peggy ventured.

“Me? You mean *me*? I’ve been on since I was fifteen.”

“You don’t look any more than that now.”

“I know,” Miss Montagu agreed, shaking out her gowns. “I made up for the part. But I thought college girls were younger than you people, and I made up too young. I was playing ingénue for two years on Broadway in ‘Dolly Dimple’—one of David Wood’s productions, you know—before I was signed on with Miss Barrystarr.”

“We thought you’d be about thirty,” Henrietta Gaylord suggested.

“Would you rather I’d be thirty?” the girl asked. “I’ll be thirty if you’d like. Maybe that’s better, seeing I have to direct you. What sort of a make-up do you use? It’s no good buying cheap.”

She was already undressing. The girls gasped in horrified amazement as she unconcernedly kicked off her shoes, unfastened her schoolgirl dress and flung it across the room, shook off her petticoats, and appeared in pink silk embroidered shirt, knickers, and silk socks.

“Don’t you wear—*stockings*?” some one barely breathed.

“Hardly anybody wears stockings now,” Miss Montagu sweetly explained. “How about thirty-five? That’s a nice, dignified age.”

She was tugging at her brassière and corsets. It was too late for the girls to retreat. Absorbed in her task, she did not even know that there was horror on the faces about her. She was doing the patent thing; Peggy's room was offered to her as a dressing room, and what does one use a dressing room for save to dress and undress? There was no notion of modesty or immodesty, yet she released herself from her straight little-girl corsets, let out her figure, and recorseted herself in a pink-silk creation that changed her body from that of a mere undeveloped girl to that of a mature woman. Then, without a blush of concern, she ran around the room in her pink silk underwear, looking for a garter, a ribbon, a lace camisole.

Out of her suit case she pulled her make-up box, and at the mirror—it was a very small mirror, and she mentioned the fact—transformed her very features, even to the making of a frown between her eyes. Her cheeks became less pink, her eyebrows deeper, her lashes somehow shorter. There was a faint suggestion of care in her face. With a swift turn of her hand, she piled her braids high on her head, then, bending, pulled off her socks and pulled on black silk stockings and high-heeled slippers. She hesitated between a green satin and a black velvet gown.



"You're supposed to be a lady. A lady doesn't fall over her clothes."

"The black would be better in the gym," Peggy made bold enough to say.

It was assumed in an instant, and one of the girls at a nod came forward to fasten it. Miss Montagu straightened her tall, lithe figure—she was, miraculously, tall—swept the slight train behind her, and smiled maturely. There she stood—a woman of thirty-five.

"Well," she asked, "am I better now? I liked being a kid, but these corsets are a lot more comfortable. Will we go? Do I need a hat? Let me see. This hat I think——"

There was suddenly an air of deference about the girls. The strange thing,

as they afterward thought it over, was that, with the sunlight direct upon Miss Montagu's face, they could barely tell that she was artificially transformed.

There was no longer need for pity. Life in Byrnmeadow College had dwindled to a small, simple thing. This actress was a mystery that made them wonder if they knew anything about life at all. Which was life—their own or Miss Montagu's? And what was Miss Montagu's? What was Miss Montagu herself? They were puzzled beyond relief, and, arrived at the gymnasium, those not on the stage watched their temporary stage manager with a mixture of frank admiration and equally frank curiosity. Their "Princess" world was topsy-turvy; it was as if life itself had turned from reality to actress.

The play was a creation of the most fertile brains of the freshman class. With one of Sheridan's comedies for a basis, several of the girls had evolved a dramatic form suited to the requirements of 1918, peppered with local hits and salted with a plentiful amount of easy French and Latin phrases. The period of the resultant drama was 1780, the scenes an English garden and English interiors. Gilpin Graham, a young Scot, was in love with Amelia Wray, a beautiful English girl. The girl's mother, Mrs. Cora Wray, a middle-aged widow, wished her daughter to marry Count Maurice, a French nobleman of ancient family and vast wealth. But Gilpin could plead his cause, and long before the first act reached its curtain, he threatened, in a touching love scene, to seize the not unwilling Amelia in his arms. Mrs. Wray appeared in the nick of time, and came upon the lovers about to embrace.

At the back of the gymnasium, Miss Montagu had seated herself majestically, as befits a woman of thirty-five, beside Janet Lygatt. A moment's smile of amusement twinkled on her lips;

then she settled herself to the task of critical listening. The scene progressed. She grew restless. At last, just as the mother stepped forward and discovered her daughter and young Gilpin sitting in close conversation on a garden bench, Miss Montagu could contain herself no longer.

"You, there!" she called. "I mean you stepping all over your clothes. You're a mess."

It was the widowed mother whom she was addressing. Miss Montagu moved down the center of the gymnasium and mounted to the stage.

"Give me your part," she commanded, "and go back there to where I was. Yes, back there, and I'll show you how you did it. The woman that brought me in will show you where to go."

She waited until her order was confusedly carried out.

"Now, then," she said, "watch me."

She gave a clever imitation of the mother's awkward entrance.

"Why, you're supposed to be a lady," she explained. "A lady doesn't fall over her clothes. You've got to learn to walk. You're what they call a dowager, and you must walk like one. This way." Angela Montagu stepped twice across the stage with her head high and her body taut. There was no doubt that she knew how a dowager should walk. "And you're English," she continued. "You've got to remember that. Here, I'll read these lines: 'It's getting quite chilly in the garden, isn't it?' 'Isn't it?' You must lift your voice like me with that. That's English. If you're speaking naturally, you'd just let it fall, but when you talk English, you've got to lift it. See?" She tried it again. "Now," she said, "I'll take that entire entrance line and walk on the way you ought to. 'It's getting quite chilly in the garden, isn't it? Why, Amelia! I'm surprised! And Mr. Graham! I fear we must say good

afternoon to Mr. Graeham.' When you're on the stage, you don't *say* a thing, you *think* it. These words—you never give them a thought. It's what you *think* that counts. But you must think English." Then, to the now thoroughly distracted mother:

"Come back here and try it over again."

Miss Montagu's poise was perfect; her exquisite English diction was in sharp contrast to her ordinary speech.

The girl from the back of the room, blushing furiously, was obeying Miss Montagu's order. Every one had forgotten that, not so long ago, Miss Montagu had herself appeared like a school-girl.

"No, no, no!" said that lady. "You look like an Irish bogtrotter. Come over here!"

Side by side, in full observation of the attentive girls, the two took the steps until the mother was again ordered to try them alone.

"Your time's wrong," said Miss Montagu. "You're jerky, and you take too short steps. For Heaven's sake, don't act as if you had stage fright!"

"I have," the girl feebly protested.

"Of course. But don't *act* as if you had. There, that's better. But don't wear that expression as if nobody was home. Do it once more. Fine! That's really fine. Now try it again."

She allowed the action to proceed, and the beautiful Amelia, who in most of the play talked more with her eyes than her lips, now engaged with her mother in what should have been a rapid-fire conversation.

"Stop!" ordered Miss Montagu. "You—Amelia. You have only a few sides, even if you are on most of the time, and you're not up in them. And you're not a quick study."

"Miss Montagu," said Peggy Herr for her comrades, "I'm afraid we are very ignorant. But really no one of us could understand that."

Miss Montagu paused.

"What don't you understand?" she asked, puzzled. "I guess we don't talk just the same language, but what's hitting you?"

"Well, 'sides,'" admitted Peggy.

"And what do you mean by 'not a quick study'?" asked the freshman poet.

"Don't you know?" Miss Montagu concealed her swift look of scorn. "'Sides,'" she defined, "means sides of paper. Maybe I ought to say 'sides of paper.'" She ran her fingers over the manuscript of the play. "Amelia has to learn so many sides of paper. Get me?"

"You mean 'pages'?"

"Yes. Of course. And the other thing—"

"'Quick study.'"

"Well, a quick study is somebody that doesn't stutter and tie themselves up in a love knot with their lines. That's all it means. I'll read the part for you."

She labored with them for hours. She corrected their accent and guided their halting tongues to the English English in which she made certain the play was written. She assumed the different rôles in rapid succession and spoke in fast monotones, punctuated by expressive gestures and dramatic climaxes. She struggled with the love scenes and scolded at the girls' lack of emotionalism.

"You don't cry as if you meant it," she said, holding her head to one side, as she watched the temporarily discarded lover weep his way off the stage. "You don't feel it. You're just making a noise you think sounds like sobbing. When you've got an emotional scene to play, just kill off your mother and father, stab them with a knife, and drag them around by the hair—so you'll give them a lot of pain, you know. Then you'll cry. I always do something like that when I have an emotional scene. You've got to, you know. It's maybe



"You look like Aphrodite," said Peggy, as she pressed the other's hand.

a little cruel. But you've got to, to get yourself worked up."

Never for an instant, however little the girls followed her, did she lose their respect during that long afternoon, save over a few French phrases.

"*Cherchez la femme*" and "*comme il faut*" she cheerfully pronounced with what she called sang-frody, and was

amazed when the girls laughed. Yet she quickly regained her poise. Peggy Herr, interrupting, said something tactful about French pronunciation being difficult for people not used to it, and explained how the sounds should be made. Miss Montagu, with alert ears and imitative tongue, recited them perfectly after Peggy, but without the slightest knowledge of their meaning. She radiantly smiled and caught the girls' admiration again before they realized that they had faltered in it.

"I guess," she nodded, before going on with her work, "I was in the right church all right, but the wrong pew."

The shadows were thick in the gymnasium when she finally relinquished the play to the amateur performers; not, it is true, with a feeling of accomplishment, but with the knowledge that she had done her best in the limited hours. The girls were sure she had done wonders. They explained that their freshman song of victory was

sung as a mark of respect to her, and after they had displayed their attitude in song, they changed it to a kind of hushed veneration that followed close at her heels straight to Peggy's room.

"We've sent to the livery stables in Pansycroft for a cab to take you and your trunks back to the station for the eight train," Ernestine Witherspoon

announced. "So the porter needn't bother. You *will* stay and take dinner with us, won't you, Miss Montagu? It's not very exciting, but we do so want to have you."

"Thank you," said Miss Montagu. "I'd like to."

"And would you like one of us to telephone for you so some one will meet you at the other end?"

"No. I'll just take a taxi from Grand Central."

She would get a taxi, even if not in Brynmeadow.

There were not many minutes before dinner, but Miss Montagu was sure, now that she was no longer a director, that she must change her dress. Only Peggy stayed in the room this time, and Miss Montagu must have been a little tired, for she did not talk much. She stood solemnly before the little mirror and took the care away from her face. She let down her red braids and then fastened them midway up the back of her head, pulling little tufts over her ears. She put on low-heeled dancing pumps and a white muslin dress, from which she removed all the blue ribbons. Her frock was rather short and full, the neck scarcely low, and, as she turned from the mirror to her hostess, she was a simple, natural girl of twenty, with a wistful look in her large blue eyes. For a moment a lump rose to Peggy's throat. Was *this* the real Angela Montagu, after all?

"What are you reading?" asked the visitor.

"I was just looking over some Latin for to-morrow's translation."

"It's not a novel, then."

Peggy laughed.

"Whoever heard of calling 'Allen and Greenough' and this stupid old '*De Senectute*' novels?" she said.

"You just spend your time learning things, don't you?" asked Angela.

"We don't learn at dinner, Miss Montagu," said Peggy, taking the young

actress' arm. "And I think that gong is to summon us."

Miss Montagu hesitated.

"Do I look all right?"

"You look darling," the college girl said.

The corridor was filled with laughing girls in pretty evening dresses. They were all chattering, and ceased only for a gasping moment as they came up to Miss Montagu. Miss Montagu, without any apparent effort, was soon one of them to all intents, not talking except in answer to questions, but watching and listening with a wondering smile on her face and questions in her eyes.

She sat at a long table in a large hall full of other girls, mostly older than her companions. She looked about her, and it did not seem to her companions that it could be acting when she said she loved it all and wished she were really part of it. They, on their side, were watching her, and their honest admiration was barely tempered by their class exultance.

"Don't you ever see any men?" Angela asked one of her neighbors. "Aren't men ever allowed here?"

"Oh, yes! They may come any time they want, if they're invited. But it's so nice not to have to have them around. Of course, they have to leave at half past nine."

"Do they ever get fresh?"

The neighbor blushed.

"I don't think so," she said. "This is your first visit to Brynmeadow, isn't it?"

But, altogether, the day had been a success. When the actress again changed her dress, so that she might go appropriately to the train, she was the object of the entire freshman class' attention. They deluged her with questions about their lines and about her acting and about Miss Barrystarr; all of which she tried adequately to answer. Miss Barrystarr she even dared

to call by her first name, and Shakespeare she spoke of in the same sentences with George M. Cohan.

She put on a dark-gray tailor-made suit that nevertheless kept her looking the not-too-ancient age of twenty. She slightly tilted a severe gray straw sailor hat on her brilliant hair and picked up gray furs as she locked her pieces of baggage. The girls gave three roaring cheers of gratitude, and Peggy Herr, who, more than the rest, felt the honor, since she had lent her study as a dressing room, led the chorus of thanks. Peggy was still effusively grateful as she guided Miss Montagu down the stone steps to her cab.

"You look like Aphrodite," said Peggy, as she pressed the other's hand. "And I'm sure you walk like Juno.

And Zeus himself couldn't change into so many different people! And you're so self-possessed. And now you are going away, and perhaps we shan't even see you again. But, oh, we shall never, never forget!"

"Cut it," said Miss Montagu, with a magnificent wave of her arm. "It can't be done without a make-up."

The hatbox and bulging wardrobe trunk jolted while the cab rolled through the darkness toward Byrnmeadow station. The lights from Carnegie West Dormitories twinkled less and less brightly. Miss Angela Montagu leaned far out of the cab window and waved to the unanswering distance.

"Good-by!" she whispered. "Good-by! But, oh, I wish to God I knew as much as you!"



Some Segments of Woman's Sphere

NEARLY five million women over sixteen years of age are employed in the United States in two hundred and ninety-nine occupations. The statistics of woman's work present some interesting points. It is rather a surprise to discover that over seven hundred thousand are listed under "agricultural pursuits," and that, of these, over four hundred thousand are farmers, planters, and overseers. In round numbers, more than three hundred thousand are teachers and professors in schools and colleges; fifty-two thousand are musicians and teachers of music; eleven thousand artists and teachers of art; eight thousand government officials; seven thousand physicians and surgeons; six thousand six hundred actresses and professional show women; while another six thousand are imposingly described as literary and scientific persons.

At first glance the listing of nearly two million women under "Domestic and Personal Service," the largest number in any class, may provoke some wonder at the ever-increasing wail over the servant problem; but this division includes not only servants, laundresses, and waitresses, but boarding-house and hotel keepers, nurses, and midwives, some five thousand barbers and hairdressers, and, most astonishing of all, eight thousand janitors and sextons.

Next in size is the class of "Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits," with over a million women, including bookbinders, printers, textile workers, cigar makers, shirt, collar, and cuff makers, seamstresses, milliners, and dressmakers.

Agents, bookkeepers, and accountants, clerks and copyists, merchants and dealers, packers and shippers, saleswomen, stenographers, and typewriters, and telegraph and telephone operators, make up another quarter of a million in "Trade and Transportation."

Votes and "The Vicious Interests"

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "By Cool Sloam," "Afterglow," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

MRS. MACFARLEY sat at work in the bright sitting room above the saloon. It was a corner room, abundantly lighted by three windows on each of two sides. In addition to admitting sunlight, these afforded a dreary prospect of the blasting and building that were rapidly converting a semirural outskirts of the city into an unlovely extension of it. Except that she could still see the Harlem River winding between its banks, the district bore little resemblance to the one whither she had come as a bride, a quarter of a century before. But Mrs. MacFarley closed out the unattractive marks of progress by heavily patterned lace curtains, clear to the bottom of her long French windows, and by boxes on the piazza outside. In summer these boxes were gay with the scarlet geraniums and orange nasturtiums that she loved; in winter she had to content herself with ivy and close-clipped laurel; but she mitigated the somberness of the evergreens by attaching to them bunches of artificial red berries here and there—thereby permanently destroying the faith of winter-flying birds in humanity.

The room in which she sat was neat, comfortable, and old-fashioned, like herself. A Brussels carpet, once brilliantly flowered, now sobering into gray from the relentless passage of time and the carpet sweeper, was tacked firmly to the baseboard on every side. A heterogeneous assortment of armchairs,

rockers, and sofas gave evidence that at times Mrs. MacFarley liked her ease. The walnut table in the middle of the room shone from many years' application of furniture polish. It held an empty workbasket, gilded and adorned with blue ribbons, a plush album, a large photograph of a gentleman with a sweeping mustache, framed in a shell frame which informed the close observer that it was "a souvenir of Cape May," and a large glass case of preserved flowers.

The gentleman was the late Mr. MacFarley, and the flowers were a reminder of the splendors that had attended his obituary. An enlargement of the photograph, done in crayon, hung above the desk at which Mrs. MacFarley was at work; unblinkingly Mr. MacFarley faced the comparisons of a highly colored lithograph of the benign countenance of Pope Leo XIII. A small Franklin stove, in which a wood fire was laid for lighting, occupied the middle of one wall; but on this December day, mild and bright, sufficient heat was obtained from the large stovepipe that came up through the floor in one corner and, traversing the ceiling obliquely, passed through it into the room above.

This stovepipe, coming from the little room behind the bar downstairs, not only heated Mrs. MacFarley's domestic quarters economically, but also enabled that efficient woman to keep a restraining guardianship upon her customers.



"I suppose you know my husband's name," she said, casually and modestly.

"I won't pretend not to be proud of it."

Sound as well as warmth traveled up that black sheet-iron conductor. Oftentimes a gentleman, growing overemphatic in his evening potations, had been astonished by the sudden appearance in the saloon of its determined proprietor, and by finding himself ejected from the premises with a few firm, somewhat pedagogic words. These almost always sufficed, but on those rare occasions when alcoholic courage had led a patron to question Mrs. MacFarley's decisions, Jock Reardon, the barkeeper, added the convincing touch to the argument. Mr. Reardon was a deceptively lean man, but none of the habitués of MacFarley's Corner, as the saloon had been called from long ago,

that a gentleman with a taste for good liquor is best adapted for selling it. He had never been able to rid himself of that conviction. If the cirrhosis of the liver that resulted from his appreciation of his own wares had not removed him from his enterprise, that must have inevitably failed. But his death had come just in time to enable his widow, by unremitting labor, by farsighted bargaining, and by the aid of Mr. Jock Reardon, to escape bankruptcy.

She had worn mourning for five years. She admitted to herself, though to no one else, that it was not mere loyalty to the memory of the mustachios that prescribed her costume; it was the complicating poverty in which

were in any doubt about his vigor and muscularity.

On this morning, Mrs. MacFarley, like the good business woman that she was, was going over her accounts. It was a process that always brought a certain light of satisfaction to her eyes. She was not a niggardly woman, not unduly grasping in any way, but she had an unquenchable regard for efficiency. That regard had been outraged daily and almost hourly during the fifteen years she had passed with the late Mr. MacFarley of the mustachios.

Mr. MacFarley had gone into the saloon business on the most mistaken of theories—namely,

he had left her. She had not been able to take enough money out of the business for five years to buy herself a new outfit, or even to brighten her weeds with a little hint of returning spring. But those days were passed. Mrs. MacFarley's talent for business was as conspicuous as her husband's lack of it. As she went over her books this morning, there was every reason why she should look satisfied.

A rap sounded on the sitting-room door. Mrs. MacFarley swung her ample person on her pivot chair and faced the door.

"Come in," she called, and Jock Reardon presented his lean, seamed face in the narrow aperture.

"Lady downstairs'd like to see you," he announced briefly. Jock Reardon was sparing of words. Action was much more in his line.

"What does she want? Who is she?" asked Mrs. MacFarley.

"Don't know," was the response.

"Well, can't you tell me what she looks like? If she isn't one of my lady friends, or one of the neighbors, or somebody's wife coming to accuse me because her husband broke his pledge—who is she? You know I never see agents."

"Got nothin' to sell," said Jock Reardon patiently.

"Come inside an' shut the door, can't you?" demanded Mrs. MacFarley irascibly. "I like to see the person I'm talkin' to." She eyed him disapprovingly as he obeyed her injunction and brought the whole of his body into the room. "Jock Reardon, what's that you've got pinned onto your jacket?"

"Suffrage button," replied Jock unnecessarily, for Mrs. MacFarley's sharp eyes, aided by her sharp glasses, could easily enough make out the meaning of the yellow button pinned to the bar-keeper's white jacket.

"Where did you get it?" demanded

Mrs. MacFarley, with rising indignation.

Mr. Reardon gave a jerk of his head toward the room below.

"She gave it to me," he stated tersely.

"She? You mean that woman you said wanted to see me?" Mr. Reardon nodded wearily in reply. "Is that what she wants to see me about?" went on Mrs. MacFarley. "Well, you can just go down an' tell her that I don't want to see her, or any other bold-faced creature that comes botherin' men at their work an' tryin' to waste the time of busy women. An' you'd better take that thing off you. I guess my customers don't want to see any of that votes-for-women stuff."

"You won't see her, then?" Thus briefly the bartender defined the mind of his employer.

"I don't know but I will, after all. I'd like to see the kind of lookin' woman that makes a fool of men."

Jock Reardon opened his mouth and gave vent to a rusty chuckle.

"Look in the glass," he advised her enigmatically, as he closed the door behind him and descended the stairs.

Mrs. MacFarley sat suddenly upright, galvanized into an unusual erectness by surprise. Not surprise, of course, to find that her faithful employee was under her domination—that she had known for years—but surprise to learn that he knew it, too.

"The very idea!" said Mrs. MacFarley to herself.

There was a tap on the door. She strove to banish the blush that had mounted her plump countenance at Jock's unexpected declaration and the lurking smile that insisted upon indenting the corners of her lips. She strove to make her "Come in" hostile.

The door opened and a young woman floated into Mrs. MacFarley's line of vision, such a young woman, it is safe to say, as had never before paused in the neighborhood of MacFarley's Cor-

ner longer than might be required for retiring an automobile. She was young—Mrs. MacFarley's own forty-five years suddenly became gray and dull and dreary before the dewy youthfulness of the vision—and yet there was such an air of ease, of self-possession, about the newcomer that Mrs. MacFarley felt herself crude, inexperienced, before her.

"Good morning, Mrs. MacFarley," began the young woman fluently. "It is awfully good of you to see me like this. I'm making a house-to-house canvass of twenty blocks up here for the party—the suffrage party——"

"Won't you be seated?" interrupted Mrs. MacFarley stiffly.

"Thank you," answered the young woman, dropping into a golden-oak rocker, "but I really oughtn't to take your time. It's unnecessary, too, of course. For, of course, a woman like you, a successful woman of affairs, is a suffragist. I don't have to ask you, I am sure."

"You're mistaken," said the proprietress of the saloon, with energy and conviction. "I'm no suffragist. I believe in women mindin' their own business an' attendin' to the job God gave them."

There was not the slightest change in the brightly interested, friendly expression on the young face. Evidently this particular suffrage canvasser was well trained in the useful social art of self-control.

"We agree perfectly," she assured Mrs. MacFarley. "I am sure that, if you can spare me the time and we may have a few minutes' talk, we shall find that we believe in exactly the same things."

A sound that it would be unduly harsh to name a grunt issued from Mrs. MacFarley's lips. It was followed by a question:

"What might your name be?"

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I should

have told you at once. I am Norma Jarvis—Mrs. David Jarvis."

"Oh!" said Mrs. MacFarley. Her caller had mentioned a name of whose expensive splendor not even Mrs. MacFarley, the proprietress of a saloon on the outskirts of the city, leagues removed from any contact with the world of fashion other than that afforded by the Sunday supplement, could be ignorant.

Mrs. Jarvis smiled in friendly fashion.

"I suppose you know my husband's name," she said casually and modestly. "I won't pretend not to be proud of it——"

"You've a right to be. But what does he think of your runnin' around like a madwoman, goin' into dear knows what kind of places? I keep a respectable bar myself, but you didn't know it. Does he know what you're doin' at all?"

Mrs. Jarvis smiled, with no diminution of bright cordiality.

"Oh, yes!" she answered. "It was my husband who converted me to suffrage. He knows all about my activity and quite approves of it. But won't you let us talk for a minute about women's minding their own business, as you put it, and attending to the job that God gave them?"

"I'll not," answered Mrs. MacFarley, with determination. "What good would it do? I know what I think. It's not by choice you find me runnin' a business; it was necessity drove me to it. I'm a widow, an' I've got to take care of myself. But that's no reason I should forget my sex an' go around wantin' to be a man, whether or no."

Resolute hostility seemed powerless to change Mrs. Jarvis' attitude of complete friendliness, but she rose to take her leave.

"I see you don't want to bother with me any more to-day. But I'm a horribly persistent person, and I'm going

to send you some literature. I'm not a very good talker, but you'll never be able to resist the arguments in some of our pamphlets, showing that women need the vote in order to attend to their own business, in order to regulate the conditions that their children will meet in the world. But I won't spoil the effect by saying badly what the leaflets will say so well to you. I hope I haven't taken too much of your time?"

"Well," answered Mrs. MacFarley, without enthusiasm, "I'm a busy woman."

She watched Mrs. Jarvis' light figure out of the room.

"Jock will be waitin' to show her the side way out," she said gloomily to herself.

It seemed at the moment an almost intolerable indignity that her bartender should presume to have an opinion of his own in contradiction to those which she held. Being an honest woman, she was obliged to admit to herself that the chief element in her annoyance was Mrs. Jarvis' youth and charm, but it was not rendered more bearable by that knowledge.

When Jock came up, half an hour later, to announce the desire of her old acquaintance and competitor, Mr. Martin Leary, to speak with her, she detained him to comment sarcastically upon his surrender to the young suffragist. He was still flaunting the yellow button on his white jacket.

"A pretty face can make a fool of any man," she informed him sourly.

Jock made no reply, perhaps hiding this truth to be self-evident. He merely



"Jock will be waitin' to show her the side way out," she said gloomily to herself.

gazed at her with the bored air of a man waiting for some one to come to the point.

"Haven't you a word to say for yourself?" she snapped.

"That ain't what you hire me for," replied Mr. Reardon succinctly.

"I don't hire you to be wearin' the badges of every fool notion that strikes the town," she replied. "Why don't you take it off you, Jock?"

"I believe in women's rights," was the obstinate man's rejoinder. "I've believed in 'em ten years now. Ever since you took holt here. I'm glad there's a button I can wear that'll say so, without me botherin' to talk about it myself."

"Jock, you're a fool! Just because that Jarvis woman had a doll-baby, pretty face an' a smile that wouldn't come off, you're ready to wear any kind of a harness she offers you. You're old enough to know better."

"Shall I send Martin Leary up?" Jock seemed to think that he had exhausted the suffrage theme, and he came back to business. "He wants to borrow money off you."

"What's that to you? It's not your money. Send him up."

Jock withdrew, apparently unaffected by his employer's discourteous tone. Two minutes later, the sitting-room door opened to admit the substantial person of Mr. Leary. He was a short man, and somewhat stout, but he carried himself with a jaunty, jovial air that took the curse from his misplaced inches. His broad, ruddy face was always smiling, or, at any rate, twinkling upon the world. His thick, wavy, iron-gray hair crowned a head of really noble shape. He was the very picture of a cheerful, friendly Irish priest or a popular character actor. He greeted his hostess with broad gallantry.

"As pretty as a full-blown rose!" he exclaimed as he took her hand.

Mrs. MacFarley sighed, thinking of the rose not quite so fully blown that had passed through her room a half hour before.

"Full blown is soon done, Marty," she said, but she looked pleased.

"Not when you're talkin' about the hardy sorts," Mr. Leary insisted. "The hothouse ones—I'll grant ye they don't last. But the outdoor, hardy, ever-bloomin' varieties—"

"You're talkin' like a seedman's cata-

logue, Marty," laughed Mrs. MacFarley, "an' I don't know anything so full of lies as that—unless, maybe, it's a brewery agent. Well"—her manner became more businesslike—"what brings you here at this time in the mornin'? You're not a lady suffragist with time of your own to waste an' no regard for other people's."

Martin Leary's broad face took on a look of gravity.

"Indeed, then, an' I'm not. Neither the one nor the other. Neither the lady nor the suffragist. Tell me, Ellen, dear"—he assumed the intimacy of old friendship—"what is it that the women are thinkin' of? Don't they want men to take care of them any more? Aren't they contented to be looked up to? Don't they realize they've got a better work in the world than comin' into politics? Ellen, as I was sayin' to Molly no later than last night, politics is no place for a woman. She's too good for it. She's too pure for it. It ain't"—Mr. Leary conceded it gracefully—"that she lacks the intellect. It's that she's too high-minded for the business."

"High-minded or not," replied Mrs. MacFarley, with conviction, "she's got no time to be muddlin' in politics. A woman that's tendin' to her job has just about all that she can do in the world."

"Ah, yes!" Mr. Leary was impressive. "To make a man's home for him, to bring up his children straight an' decent, to be an influence, to attend to her religious duties—I guess that'll keep women about as busy as their strength will allow."

"I'm glad," said Mrs. MacFarley grimly, recollecting the recalcitrant Jock downstairs, "that we're agreed. Maybe the reason is that you haven't met with a fashionable young lady named Jarvis—David Jarvis' wife. She seems able to wind the men around her little finger—"



"As pretty as a full-blown rose!" he exclaimed as he took her hand.

"An' have I not met her?" interrupted Mr. Leary rhetorically. "Didn't I find her in my own place yesterday, colloquing with Molly. She had the woman dazzled with her. Molly's not got the head that you've got on your shoulders, Ellen," Molly's husband ended, with a sigh.

"You saw her, an' she didn't win you over?" Mrs. MacFarley's voice was satirically intoned. "Dear, dear! You're made of tougher wood than

Jock, down below. He'll be carryin' a banner in their next parade if she asks him to."

The caller shook his head gravely over this reported weakness on the part of another man. And then, his hostess thus soothed and mollified by his agreement with her views, Mr. Leary approached the vital topic of his call. Could his dear old friend, Ellen MacFarley, see her way clear not only to renewing the note for five hundred dol-

lars that she held, but also to making a new loan of two hundred and fifty more?

Mrs. MacFarley leaned back in her desk chair and surveyed Mr. Leary with steady eyes.

"I've renewed the five hundred dollars once," she pointed out.

"I know ye have. An' if I didn't know you had the biggest heart in the world, as well as the longest head," Martin assured her eagerly, "I wouldn't dream of askin' for a renewal. I'd go to the bank. I'd go to Doebler, at the brewery. But I said to myself, 'Ellen MacFarley has been a lucky woman. MacFarley's Corner has stood right in the path of improvement. Public works have been goin' on there for ten years—streets an' street-car tracks, subways an' waterworks—always a thirsty crowd ready to go in an' get a glass of beer. She's had luck an' she's had brains,' I said to myself, 'to make the most of her luck. She's got money laid up in the bank. She knows she'll get her interest from me as regular as if I were a United States bond, an' besides all that, she's got the big, kind heart—she likes to oblige a friend.' That's what I said to myself, Ellen, when I was debatin' about the bank an' about Doebler."

He sighed and looked sentimentally at Mrs. MacFarley. "Ellen, woman," he added, "I wonder would you be understandin' me if I told you that I like takin' help from ye, an' givin' help to you? You've the brain of a man an' the heart of a woman. If—well, I won't be sayin' a word against one that's dead an' gone, an' hot pincers wouldn't drag a word out of me against Molly—but sometimes, Ellen, I can't but think what you an' I——"

Mrs. MacFarley's upraised hand interrupted him. She was frowning a little, yet there was a color, not of displeasure, on her plump cheeks. She shared the almost universal feminine

point of view, and believed that with more efficient wives most of the masculine failures of her acquaintance might have been something quite resembling successes. Still, she had lent a good deal of money, first and last, to Mr. Leary.

"I see you've a new little trotter," she observed, not so irrelevantly as it might have seemed.

A wine-red flush darkened Mr. Leary's already ruddy face.

"Who's been tellin' you that? A new horse I have. I had to have one, to draw the delivery wagon. No trotter at all, though, of course, I'm a judge of horseflesh, an' I didn't get the worst of the bargain. Where did ye hear that yarn about a trotter?"

"Jock Reardon said something about it."

"Jock Reardon's always sayin' something that he'd better leave unsaid," snarled Mr. Leary. "Every one knows what he's after—he's after you an' your money an' your business. He thinks he owns the place already."

"Still, that has nothing to do with his sayin' that you'd bought a trotter." The lady brought the conversation back to its starting place.

"If you don't want to lend me the money, Ellen, say so. If you think I should have met the note instead of buyin' a horse to drag the goods I sell to the people that keep my little place goin', say so. You've only to say the word an' I'll go out of the house an' straight to the bank——"

Perhaps in some layer of Mrs. MacFarley's intellect the thought was conceived that this might not be an inadvisable course for Mr. Leary to pursue; but habit was strong, and the hurt intonation of her old friend seemed to accuse her of cold-heartedness. It takes a remarkably strong mind to believe in its own innocence in the face of accusation. Besides, his flattery had been a sort of balm to a wound inflicted

by the glancing beauty of Norma Jarvis' youth, and by Jock Reardon's surrender to it. She put up her hand to restrain her caller from immediate recourse to the bank.

"I guess you needn't bother with the bank, Marty," said Mrs. MacFarley.

Marty thanked her.

"You'll never regret it, Ellen," he told her warmly. "Everything is lookin' brighter for me. They're diggin' for a water main through Howland Avenue, an' that'll be a good thing for me. Oh, you'll never regret it!"

"I don't want to say anything to hurt your feelings, Marty," observed Mrs. MacFarley, "but one reason that MacFarley's Corner has been a success these late years is that neither the boss nor the help is overfond of samplin' the goods. That was poor Michael's trouble, as you must remember, for you were often with him when he took a drop too much. I'm not sayin' this out of criticism to you or to him; but you know what I mean, Marty. The Lord knows I don't like this idea of prohibition, but the last man to be a drinker is the man that sells drink." She nodded sagely.

Mr. Leary looked at her with moist eyes and stretched out his hand in a gesture of leave-taking.

"I know you're speakin' for my own good, Ellen," he said fervently. "Believe me, I'll remember your words, an' I'll act on them. Ah, Ellen, what a woman you are! What could you not make of a man if—if—" But Mr. Leary prudently broke off before ardor and admiration could tempt him to disloyalty. "Ellen, you've been the best influence in my life!"

Then there was a little business of note signing and exchanging, and then Mr. Leary backed out of the sitting room and went down the stairs. The last words from him that lingered upon the air were these:

"Votes, indeed! I tell ye, Ellen, a womanly woman don't need the vote. She can get what she wants out of a man without resortin' to politics."

And such is the wonderful power of language that it never occurred to Mrs. MacFarley that it was her old friend, Marty, who had gotten what he wanted out of her, and not vice versa.

II.

It was half past eleven o'clock at night. The scene had not changed, except for the drawing of the red rep curtains at all the windows of Mrs. MacFarley's sitting room, and for the lighting of the droplight on the table near the stovepipe.

In a comfortable rocker beside the table sat the head of the establishment. Her feet, small and pretty and smartly slipped—Mrs. MacFarley was rather vain of her feet—reposed upon an embroidered hassock. Her head reclined against a tidy crocheted to represent a stork standing upon one leg. In her broad lap a book lay open—"Moths." Mrs. MacFarley was fond of fiction, and frequently solaced the loneliness of her evenings by reading the adventures of the British aristocracy as portrayed by Ouida. To-night she had fallen asleep over them.

Suddenly she awoke. The sounds traveling up the sheet-iron stovepipe from the saloon below were disturbing instead of soothing, as they had been when she had "dropped off." She sat up and listened, wondering which of her customers had overestimated his powers of resistance to alcohol. To her surprise, Jock's was the voice that she heard—Jock, whose taciturnity was a byword among the habitués of the place, Jock, who never took part in the noisier manifestations of the saloon until a glance from her eye suggested to him the bodily removal of offenders.

"You've got no right to talk about



"I'm puttin' you out, if you've got to know, you big stiff, you!" shouted Jock.

women like that," he was announcing loudly. "An' sure I'll wear a button. I'll wear twenty buttons if I feel like it."

"Jock, you're drinkin'." The grave accusation traveled up the stovepipe in the alcoholically solemn tones of her forenoon's visitor, in the inebriatedly grave manner of Mr. Martin Leary. "You're drinkin'. Nothing else could make you say that you thought women capable of votin'. It's too bad of you, Jock, too bad. There's no such thing as a successful bar with a barkeeper always takin' a nip——"

"You ought to know that, if any one does," interpolated Jock.

"Women," pursued the solemn voice, "are meant for the brighteners of our hard lives, Jock. I yield to no one"—the voice rose to oratorical heights—"in my devotion to the fair sex. But man's equals they are not. They have feelin's, not minds. No minds, Jock—no minds! They're children, Jock, me boy, children——"

"You're a pretty one to be talkin' like that—you that wouldn't have a roof over your head this blessed minute

if it wasn't for your wife an' another lady that I needn't be mentionin'!" Mr. Reardon's tone was angry and scornful.

"Pretty little poppets, that's what they are, Jock. No mind, no mind!" Mr. Leary continued. "Pretty little poppets. Toys for a man's lighter hours. You shouldn't take them seriously, Jock. That's where you make your mistake."

"Aw, shut up, can't you?" demanded the barkeeper. "You're drunk. You don't know what you're sayin'."

"*In vino veritas*," Jock. You don't know what that means. You're not an educated man. I am. If my father hadn't died when I was seventeen, it's a lawyer I'd have been, or maybe a priest. I've an education, an' the Latin words I've just said to you mean that you can count on a drunken man to speak the truth. I may have taken a drop or two too much—it's raw stuff that you sell here at best—so it's the truth I'm tellin' you. Your mistake is in takin' women seriously. Where're ye goin'?"

"I'm goin' to tend to my business behind the bar. It's more profitable than waitin' on you," replied Jock, with pointed bitterness.

But apparently his summons to the barroom was a brief one; and apparently also his belligerent attitude toward Ellen MacFarley's old friend was such that intercourse with that contentedly inebriated gentleman had for him the fascination of a sore that one cannot forbear from testing. In a few minutes Mrs. MacFarley, very wide awake now and quite shamelessly listening at her point of vantage, heard him return to the little room behind the bar.

"My wife, she'd fall for that votes-for-women nonsense if I'd let her," Mr. Leary confided to him. "She had quite a lot to say about not thinkin' Heinrichsohn fit for the school board because of that little affair—you remember it? An' she's got off some very

high talk lately about what her sewin' has amounted to, when, occasionally, I was a bit pressed for money. I have always said to her: 'Sew if you want to, Molly, sew if it pleases you, if it enables you to buy a little bit of finery for yourself or the children which you might have to go without——'"

"Haw, haw!" said Jock solemnly and derisively.

But Martin Leary was beyond the appreciation of derision. He went on with his narrative:

"An' now, since that Jarvis woman was around, an' street-corner meetin's an' all sorts of tomfoolery have been goin' on, she has the face to throw that in my teeth. But I stopped all that talk——"

"Ye did, did ye? Hit her, I suppose?" This from Jock.

"How did you know it?" inquired Mr. Leary, astonished. "Strange how things get about! Pretty poppets! But no mind, no real intellect! Very pleasin' an' pretty, in youth. I don't care much about the old hens. Give me a hot Scotch with a little cinnamon in it, Jock."

"Ye've had aplenty," replied Jock.

"I don't want any lip from you, young feller," said Mr. Leary, advancing toward the pugnacious stage of intoxication. "An' if you knew which side your bread was buttered on, you'd try to stand in with me. I'm ace high with old Ellen; I could have had her after Michael died if I hadn't been in such a hurry to tie up with Molly. You'd better watch your step! I can get pretty much anything I want out of that old girl—— Say, what're you doin'?"

"I'm puttin' you out, if you've got to know, you big stiff, you!" shouted Jock. "That's what I'm doin'. An' I'm teachin' you manners, an' how to talk about ladies, you rum-guzzlin' wife-beater, you!"

From the sounds that followed, Mrs.

MacFarley judged that Jock had quite truthfully defined at least part of his occupation. When she heard the side door slam closed, she arose and made her way downstairs. There was a color on her cheeks that would have won Martin Leary's admiring "full-blown rose," had he been privileged to see it.

It was midnight, and Jock was closing up. He looked toward the little room door when his employer spoke his name.

"What was the noise I heard?" she asked.

"Puttin' out a bum," replied Jock tersely.

"What for?"

"Political argument," replied Jock. "Besides, he'd had enough, an' then some."

"What did you have a political argument over?"

"Ship-purchase subsidy," said Jock glibly.

She stared at him.

"Why don't you tell me the truth?"

"If you know the truth," replied Jock, reddening, "why do you ask me questions?"

She dropped her pretense of ignorance and reverted to the indignities she had endured.

"Jock, do you know how much that man owes me?" Her voice shook with anger at the base ingratitude of her debtor; at other things as well.

"If he's left you anyway short," said Jock gruffly, "I can lend you a little. I've saved a good deal these ten years."

"He hasn't left me short! I may have—no intellect, no mind, Jock, an' be an old hen or a pretty little poppet!" She choked with rage as she strove to imitate Martin Leary's voice. "But I have never been such a fool as to pinch myself for the sake of helpin' Leary."

"That's good."

She stood awkwardly before him, and he stood awkwardly before her.

"Say," he suddenly blurted out, "you know I didn't believe that old gas bag when he said—what he said——"

"Would you have cared if you had believed it?" she demanded.

"I—I—it would have broken my heart, Ellen MacFarley!" cried Jock, suddenly bursting into hyperbole and other flowers of speech, and as suddenly seizing her hands. "Why?"

The answer is unessential to the narrative. But when she had made it, and when he had amplified his statements, she suddenly remarked:

"I'm goin' to send a check in the mornin' to that society of Mrs. Jarvis'. An' I'm goin' to join. An'——her plump face crinkled into laughter—"I'm goin' to make Molly Leary join. We'll show him something he doesn't know yet about woman's influence! Poppets, indeed!"





The Sibyl

By Ruth Herrick Myers

Author of "The Valentine Box," "Daughter Confessor," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

A QUARTER and a half dollar clinked melodiously together in the round pill box marked, "Money. Elizabeth Ann," and a folded leaf from a little notebook recorded the history of this fortune as follows:

For killing 123 flies at 5c. per 25 head...25c.
For helping Callie hull strawberries at

5c. per box25c.
For folding father's napkin at 1c. a time.25c.

(Really it was 26 times, but once when you were hurrying to take me to school, I didn't count it.)

Received payment.

ELIZABETH ANN.

How to spend this wealth? This was the question that now teased a little girl every time the music of the coins answered the shake she gave the little brown pill box up close to her ear. Socrates, who always followed around, vulture-wise, after his small mistress and her fly swatter, munched his last fly wistfully, as she now put the question up to him, and gave merely an unsatisfied meow when he found his mouth permanently empty.

"You're not any help at all," Elizabeth Ann scolded. "Would you save it up for a ring like Marguerite's or buy mother a box of those chocolates that I like so well?"

But it was really Marguerite herself who solved the difficulty.

"Mr. Cantner has got those pencil boxes in," she wrote that morning in

school to Elizabeth Ann. "Let's go around after school and get one."

To which Elizabeth Ann answered, "Let's," and swung the note up the aisle to Marguerite in a little tin pail she kept for this purpose.

Presently Marguerite's own pail swung down the aisle once more. Elizabeth Ann caught it and pulled forth another communication stating that: "There are some gypsies camping down in the fair grounds. They tell fortunes. Let's go down. They tell your palm for twenty-five cents and a Clara Voint for fifty cents."

To which Elizabeth Ann inquired by means of her pail:

"What's a Clara Voint?"

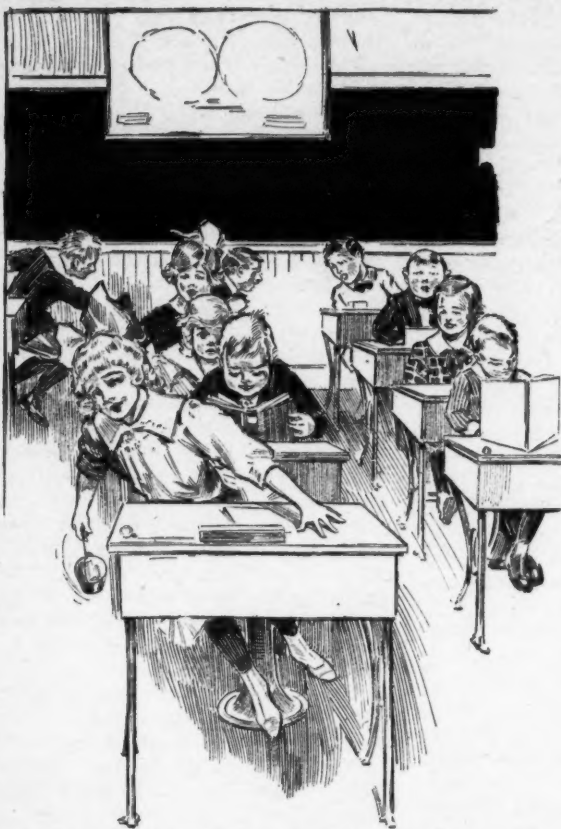
And Marguerite explained:

"They tell your name without even asking you, and things like that. I'm going to have a Clara Voint."

Elizabeth Ann matched her, of course.

"I will, too, then," she wrote. How fortunate that she had a little ready money!

Long-suffering Mr. Cantner, who ran the schoolbook store and candy shop across from the schoolhouse, had been so besieged for weeks by two little girls who came in periodically to ask for pencil boxes "like the one Bess Salisbury's aunt sent her from New York" that, in desperation, he had finally ordered a stock as nearly like the jumbled



Elizabeth Ann swung the note up the aisle to Marguerite in a little tin pail.

description of the New York article as he could find.

Elizabeth Ann's soul went out to them at first sight. They had sliding covers decorated with pink and blue roses, and after the sliding cover had been pulled open a short distance, the whole box unjointed and pivoted in various directions, disclosing shallow grooves for thin pencils and deep grooves for fat pencils and a hollow for a penholder and a place for a pencil sharpener and inkwell, to say noth-

ing of various little coops and sections that Elizabeth Ann Gale could fill without the least trouble. Her hoard of treasures was the despair of her teachers. She had collected a young family of lead animals that came in Mr. Cantner's gumdrops, which had to be placed in a set row across her desk every morning and stabled in her tin pail at night. She had a small calendar with the birthdays of every one in the room marked on it—Herb's was marked with red ink—and a wooden paper cutter made by old Tom, the school janitor, and an eraser that worked like a wheel, and a fiddle of sugar cane with horsehair strings, and a discarded watch charm of Mr. Eaton's with a compass in it that always pointed due southeast.

"They're a quarter apiece," said Mr. Cantner, after he had laid the boxes upon the counter and, with an air of duty done and a deep sigh, had sunk again into his rocking-chair behind the counter, where not much more of him than his eyes and his skullcap was visible.

Elizabeth Ann, who was so enraptured that she scarcely knew what she was about, nevertheless had presence of mind enough to give him her half dollar instead of her quarter. She always kept two coins instead of one, when-

ever possible, because it made it seem as if she had more money, and, besides, she liked to hear them clink. She and Marguerite walked out of the store, examining their pencil boxes with rapturous gestures and exclamations.

Still carrying their purchases, they walked down to the fair grounds; and here they found, huddled in the sun like so many Maltese kittens under a currant bush, a cluster of dingy, low tents with a red-and-blue sign on the foremost announcing "Madame Zari, Clairvoyant and Palm Reader." The deserted fair grounds stretched away over to the empty gray grand stand on the other side, and a bobwhite, whistling somewhere up in the hedge to a far-away mate who answered at long intervals, was all that could be heard.

"It's—it's awfully still, isn't it?" Elizabeth Ann said in a whisper. "Do you dare go in?"

"Maybe she's not home," suggested Marguerite hopefully.

"Where else would she be? There's no place for her to go, is there?"

"Perhaps they're all out stealing," Marguerite offered, in a sepulchral voice. "Gypsies go around with burlap sacks and steal, and they're so still no one ever hears them."

Elizabeth Ann's heart gave a curious quaver, and it was not lessened by the sudden sight of an old hag who threw back the flap of the tent and asked if they weren't coming in, or, after they had reluctantly complied and entered the tiny canvas anteroom, by the discovery that they were to visit separately the sibyl's shrine within.

"You go first," urged Elizabeth Ann, stepping back hastily.

"No, you," insisted Marguerite.

"You made me come."

"You could have said no."

Elizabeth Ann went in. It was like going into a snake hole. It was close and almost dark and curiously alive

with the presence of some uncanny, unknown being.

"Take off your hat and give me your hands," said its voice.

Elizabeth Ann shivered as she pulled the rubber from behind her ears and uncovered her head. They were facing one another across a narrow table, whereupon wriggled a small silver snake. The walls of the room were hung with a fish net that held as motley a collection of treasures as Elizabeth Ann's own. There were pictures of the zodiac, chains of shells, a human skull, X-ray photographs, and queer, fanciful cards whose tinselled lettering read, "Gratefully to Madame Zari."

The fortune teller herself was all in dark, somber velvet that caught the faint light duskily upon its surface. Something jangled upon her wrist as she moved it toward her "sitter." It was a complex sort of bracelet with odd silver shapes suspended from it. She picked up the silver snake and clasped it also about her wrist, and the two jangled in unison, more mysteriously than ever.

"Have you ever visited me before?" she whispered thickly, as their fingers touched. "Where's your money?"

"Oh!" said Elizabeth Ann, with a jump. "Here it is! I—I want a Clara Voint, please."

She opened the little pill box and poured the contents out into Madame Zari's hand.

"Clairvoyant readings are fifty cents. Here's only a quarter."

There was, indeed! Where could the other quarter have gone?

"Why, it was in there," insisted Elizabeth Ann, with cold shudders chasing up and down her spine. "Because I know I gave Mr. Cantner the half dollar, so that I'd have two quarters left."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

The sibyl's tone suggested that she would brook no delay.

"I'll take a palm reading, please,"



"You go first," urged Elizabeth Ann, stepping back hastily.
"No, you," urged Marguerite.

Elizabeth Ann decided hurriedly, wishing she could take a run for her life instead. How had the gypsies managed to reach into her pocket, pilfer her pill box, and return it to its place without her knowledge? Every inch of her bristled with horror, lest at that very moment the locket around her neck or the gold pin at the back of her dress, where there was a button missing, were even then being removed stealthily by that unfelt presence.

"I can give you a partial clairvoyant reading, perhaps," the fortune teller proposed grudgingly. "Have you ever visited me before?"

"No," piped Elizabeth Ann, in a very small voice.

Madame Zari clasped the cold fingers convulsively for a moment, shut her eyes, and shivered, as a tremor passed through her body.

"There is a spirit of an Indian princess," she began, in a hoarse voice, "who speaks through me, giving me messages from the spirit world. Come, princess, come! I can't hear well this morning. Speak a little louder."

Elizabeth Ann's hands lay limp and cold in Madame Zari's, as the messages began to straggle in from the Indian princess, with many groans and shudders on the part of the transmitter.

"She sees you in a large building," cried Madame Zari, in an agonized wail, "with many other children, boys and girls. There is a little girl—Wait! What is her name, princess? Ah, my dear, you have a false friend. There is a little girl you must beware of. She is not true to you. She lies. She cannot be trusted. She steals. She—she has stolen money from you recently—to-day—"

"Who is she?" cried Elizabeth Ann, forgetting her fear as she heard this important news.

"Can you give me her name, princess? Can you give me— Ah, yes! I hear you now. 'M,' did you say? It begins

with 'M'? An 'a', an 'r'— It is a long name? With a 'g' and a 't' in it? What, princess, dear? Marguerite? The name is 'Marguerite'? Do you know any one by that name?"

"Ask if it's Marguerite MacCarthy," begged Elizabeth Ann awesomely.

But Elizabeth Ann was forced to stifle her wretched suspense while Madame Zari described a wreck, in which Elizabeth Ann's life was soon to be saved by the man whom she would afterward marry. There was to be a death in her family. She would be a famous writer some day. She was a great pet with her school-teacher. But, oh, this false friend! Madame Zari's agony was truly pitiful.

"Can't you hear her other name?" pleaded Elizabeth Ann.

"Not for a quarter," said madame, suddenly resuming her natural tone. "Come again with half a dollar, and I'll try to find it for you. Take one of these cards with you. There is a prayer printed on it, and if you will read it for three months, on the seventh, seventeenth, and twenty-seventh of each month, you will be given three days' notice before your death. Good-by."

Stunned and shocked, Elizabeth Ann Gale found herself once more in the outer room, with the prayer in her hand, face to face with her false friend.

"Was it very bad?" quavered Marguerite.

Elizabeth Ann made no answer, and Marguerite was hurried into the presence of Madame Zari with a look of abject terror on her face.

Trying to collect her thoughts, Elizabeth Ann sat down on the visitors' camp stool near the door, to wait for Marguerite and to try to decide what course of action had better be adopted in this distressing case. If her false friend had been some one whom she actually loved, she would have been as heartbroken as when her father cheated at the parchesi game; but since the

classification of affection in Elizabeth Ann's mind was very strict, and she felt that she merely liked—or had liked—Marguerite MacCarthy extremely well as a chum, the discovery of such perfidy as had been disclosed by the sibyl made her violently and righteously angry. Thinking it over, Elizabeth Ann concluded that Marguerite must have stolen the quarter at the bookstore, when Mr. Cantner gave back the change, and have put it into her own pocket. Was Marguerite really a thief? It was hard to believe, but Eliz-

abeth Ann's faith in fortune tellers was strong.

"I believe I can remember just how she looked," Elizabeth Ann said to herself. "There was an expression of great guilt and cunning on her features, and at times she even smiled. Her eyes always did remind me of a fox."

Sitting on the camp stool, her hands clenched and her eyes black, Elizabeth Ann shook the reins over her imagination and let it gallop. Soon she arrived at the belief that Marguerite had even enticed her into the purchase of the

pencil box and the visit to the clairvoyant just in order to steal the money. It was bad enough to be duped, but it also rankled that Marguerite was having a much longer reading than she had had herself.

"I hope she'll enjoy her Clara Voint on my money!" Elizabeth Ann sniffed. "And she even tried to make me believe that the gypsies stole it!"

When Marguerite finally came out, her cheeks pink with excitement, she rushed to tell Elizabeth Ann the wonderful future Madame Zari had predicted for her, and was astonished to find herself talking to the empty stool. Elizabeth Ann had risen and seemed already almost halfway across the fair grounds, with such speed was she going.

"Wait!" called



Elizabeth Ann's hands lay limp and cold in Madame Zari's, as the messages began to straggle in from the Indian Princess.

Marguerite, running after her. "Elizabeth Ann!"

Elizabeth Ann merely walked faster.

"Wait! I want to tell you something."

Elizabeth Ann must have grown deaf.

"It was the funniest thing you ever heard of," Marguerite told Bess Salisbury the next morning at school. "She wouldn't stop, and she wouldn't stop, and she finally caught the Quinton Hill car, and I couldn't catch her. I can't imagine what ails her."

So far as Elizabeth Ann was concerned, Marguerite was not on the map all the next day. Having decided to adopt an attitude of superior indifference to the perfidious false friend, to ignore her entirely, she carried out this attitude with faithful consistency. Marguerite's pail swung up and down the aisle all the morning carrying a note that begged an explanation.

"What are you mad about?" Marguerite had written.

Elizabeth Ann was studying her geography lesson.

"Were you mad because I made you go first?" asked Marguerite the next time, swinging her tin pail frantically almost under teacher's very eye.

Elizabeth Ann was writing a composition.



"Little girls must be more careful of money," warned Mr. Cantner, wondering what made her head droop so oddly.

"I think you're mean," the next note waited. And when Elizabeth Ann would not accept that, the perfidious false friend's head went down into her arm on the desk. It was a terrible thing to have Elizabeth Ann mad.

It must be confessed that Elizabeth Ann's own heart was not happy. She felt that her anger was abating altogether too fast. A longing to have Marguerite back had come into it, also.

Was it possible that Madame Zari's princess might have been unauthentic in her information?

"I must work hard to 'keep mad,'" Elizabeth Ann said to herself, "or I'll give in. And she stole my quarter. She stole my quarter."

She was walking home alone, repeating her grievance over to herself and trying her best to "keep mad," when some one knocked violently and suddenly on a window.

She jumped! Why, it was old Mr. Cantner! She was in front of the schoolbook store, and, with his skullcap over one ear and his white beard shaking with his haste, he was rushing to the screen door to hail her.

"I've been a-waitin' for you all day," he told her somewhat testily. "You forgot your change yesterday."

Elizabeth Ann did not move, but a look of mortification and surprise overspread her flushed face.

"Come in! Come in! Don't you want it now?"

Mechanically she entered and held her hand for the quarter that Mr. Cantner dropped into it.

"Little girls must be more careful of money," warned Mr. Cantner, straightening his skullcap and wondering what made her head droop so oddly. "What? You're not crying! Why! Why!"

Elizabeth Ann, cuddled up to the glass show case, was shaking with repentant sobs.

"Look," invited the old man sooth-

ingly, drawing her over to the other side of the store. "Look what I have now. Ain't that cute, sister? See what happens now when I touch the spring."

It was a little round globe of the world, and when he touched a bulge on South America, the equator parted and the northern hemisphere rose like a cover, disclosing another lid within, which, when pressed, also flew open, uncovering a tiny glass inkwell.

"Ain't it cute?" repeated Mr. Cantner, closing it all up again. "You try it."

Elizabeth Ann, although her faith in human nature was undergoing a shock, was enchanted.

"How much is it?" she inquired, her thumb on South America.

"I'll let you hev it for a quarter."

"In a box?" queried Elizabeth Ann, with a sudden inspiration.

"If you want."

"And tissue paper?"

"If you want."

"And a card inclosed?"

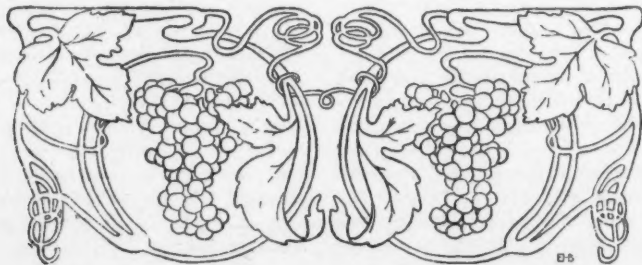
"Anything at all to please the ladies."

Elizabeth Ann clasped her hands.

"And you'll write on it for me, won't you, please, Mr. Cantner? You shade so beautifully."

"What shall I write?" Mr. Cantner asked, dipping his pen.

"Write," commanded Elizabeth Ann, her chin resting on the candy case, "write: 'Miss Marguerite MacCarthy from Elizabeth Ann, with her dearest love.'"





"My wife's not looking very fit, is she?"

Absolution

By Annette Thackwell Johnson

Author of "The Pot of Honey," "Sitari," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

AND so," said young Mrs. Osborne, a quiver in her voice, "she is going to die—just because she hadn't enough money to take a rest in time."

With an appropriately sympathetic murmur, Herndon lit his cigar; but his mustache did not quite conceal the expectant smile about his lips. He was very much at home at the Osbornes', and he found Elizabeth's conversation most delightfully piquant when it was tragic.

He had begun frequenting the house some five years before—just about the time he had been left a widower—and though he and his wife had never been

especially congenial, still there were evenings when it seemed a pleasant thing to sit and chat in a home. And what home would it be more natural for him to adopt than John Osborne's?

John had worked with Herndon & Findley for two years immediately after his admittance to the bar. Old Mr. Findley, who had been beginning to fail, had gradually handed over more and more of his legal work into the strong, capable young hands that were so eager to grapple with life; and they had served the old firm well. John was methodical, and, if a trifle slow, yet very sure and absolutely—almost aggravatingly—honest.

Herndon had told himself, with a curious smile, that, though Osborne would never make a fortune for himself, yet it was a splendid thing to have some one in the firm of Herndon & Findley who could be depended upon not only to uphold the virtues, but actually to practice them. It looked well. Osborne's uncompromising rectitude, although at times undoubtedly irritating, was, after all, an asset.

When old Findley had ceased work altogether and had given up all pretense of coming to the office, Osborne had quietly filled what breach there was, and had never even mentioned an increase of salary. Herndon had felt that it was unnecessary to mention it, either. He knew that young Osborne was engaged to be married; he had even met the young lady, Elizabeth Glover, whose wide blue eyes, as they had met his, had held not only admiration for the well-known lawyer whose firm had given her lover a start, but also a question. "When?" they had asked. "Am I to wait forever?"

Elizabeth Glover was uncommonly pretty. Herndon liked to look at her. But he had made it the rule of his life never to permit sentiment to interfere with business; and as long as he could keep Osborne working for him for almost nothing, why should he buy him a wife?

Then suddenly he had discovered that Sterret, of Sterret & Wilson, was beginning to invite John Osborne to lunch, and had put his name up at the club. People spoke with appreciation of John Osborne's straightforward qualities. Herndon & Findley could not afford to lose him. Accordingly John's salary had been raised, and John had married immediately.

The first time Herndon had gone out to the new home, he had found that the question in Elizabeth's eyes had resolved itself into an exclamation point of admiration. He rather liked the

look of it. Her eyes were wells of light, and when he bent forward and gazed into them, he perceived a glorified image of himself marked reverentially: "Our benefactor."

Decidedly it was a pleasant picture to see in a pretty woman's eyes.

Six months after Osborne's marriage, old Mr. Findley had died. John had been made full partner, the firm had become Herndon & Osborne, and the picture in Elizabeth's eyes had grown a halo.

So it was no wonder that when Mrs. Herndon's death offered a legitimate excuse for spending his evenings abroad, Herndon's motor car frequently bore him to the little house where dwelt the family he had enabled to attain happiness.

He was always made so welcome! The most comfortable chair in the room was called his. The lamp shade was tilted to just the correct angle so that it might shed light on Elizabeth's work and shield his eyes at the same time. He was free to sit and smoke, talk or be silent, just as he pleased, and he was admired every minute of the time.

From the first, he was always conscious of the young wife's presence. He knew when she entered the room, by the glow she brought with her; he knew when she went out, by the depression that seized upon him.

The first baby had been a boy, and Elizabeth, looking radiant in a pale-blue peignoir afloat with lace and ribbons, had laid the child in his arms with the information that the boy was to be his namesake, William Herndon Osborne, and would he be godfather?

Of course he would! He had tried to admire the baby, who had not been in the slightest deluded, but had promptly howled and hit his godfather's Roman nose with a crumpled red fist.

"I don't know what's the matter with him!" the mortified Elizabeth had exclaimed, removing her infant. "I was

sure he'd be good. He's so fond of men. At least I thought he was, because he adores his father."

After that, Herndon had gazed at the baby from a discreet distance, and had felt that the gift of a silver porringer and spoon amply fulfilled all godfatherly obligations.

The second Osborne child had proved a girl, who was named after her mother and called Betty; a pretty youngster, who sometimes essayed baby flirtations with the important-looking man who so frequently favored her home with his presence. But his namesake, who refused to answer to the appellation "William," and became "Billy," in consequence, chagrined his parents by refusing to have anything to do with their benefactor, and when forced to shake hands, did it so obviously under compulsion, weepingly inquiring of his mother whether he'd "be 'panked" if he didn't, that after numerous struggles even Elizabeth decided that they'd have to wait a few years until Billy grew older before he could be expected to understand just how splendidly noble Mr. Herndon was.

Fortunately Mr. Herndon did not have to be much annoyed by the Osborne children. Elizabeth was very methodical, and insisted upon early and regular hours. Sometimes sleep was a long time in closing the baby eyes, and Herndon could hear lullabies being sung to the children while he went over the points of a case or discussed a deal with their father. Then, after the pleasant hubbub of bedtime was over, Elizabeth would join them, flushed and a little tumbled with her labors, but none the less charming, seating herself quietly near the lamp, taking up her sewing, and listening to the discussion, which was sometimes on theology, sometimes morals, and occasionally civic government. Every now and again she would make a remark—a really intelligent remark.

Herndon had never taken women seriously. For him a woman had but one function. She had been created for man. Although there had been women in his life—not many women, for he was very cautious—they had never been intellectual companions, never for an instant had he considered them mental equals. A good woman should be a housekeeper, a rearer of children, a churchgoer. A light woman, of course, should be an enchantress; that was her business. Two or three times, after taking due precautions, he had allowed himself to become enchanted.

But here was an astonishingly pretty woman who was not only a mother and an excellent housekeeper, but came perilously near being an enchantress as well. A good enchantress, with brains! The phenomenon interested him. It was most surprising to discover that she could reason logically. Once or twice she had contradicted him, very prettily, to be sure, with a coquettishly uplifted eyebrow; but it had been an undoubted contradiction—and moreover she had been right!

She was more than twenty years his junior, and he, as her own eyes informed him every time he looked into them, was her benefactor. Astonishing!

The three of them, seated comfortably in the cozy drawing-room, would discuss all sorts of solemn subjects, such as the problem of human suffering, the immortality of the soul, and whether there was a God. They enjoyed it very much.

John clung with singular sweetness of spirit to the faith that seemed with him to be a sixth sense.

"God's in His heaven—all must come right with the world!" was his calm answer to the riddle of the universe.

"Sometimes I almost think John doesn't feel!" flamed Elizabeth one evening, after an exciting discussion.

One of the world's devastating earth-



Herndon's motor frequently bore him to the little house.

quakes had just occurred. Hundreds of human beings had lost their lives, and many who had escaped had been left cruelly maimed.

Elizabeth quivered away from agony. She affirmed, with frantic pity for a suffering world, that if she had had the creating of human beings she would have made them nerveless.

"Do you really mean that you'd spend an eternity incapable of joy rather than risk a little pain?" asked John Osborne, smiling.

Elizabeth regarded her husband with solemn, tragic eyes.

"Little!" she exclaimed. "Why, you don't know what pain is, John. You've been well all your life. If you had ever endured torture——"

At that moment the telephone summoned Osborne into the hall, and impulsively Elizabeth continued:

"Sometimes I think John doesn't feel!"

She found Herndon's eyes fixed meditatively upon hers.

"That's it!" they said. "John is young. He has always been healthy. He has never suffered. I am experienced. I understand." There was no need for his lips to move.

All her life Elizabeth had wanted to know—to find out—to experiment. And now in the face before her was experience, understanding.

As Herndon, still silent, looked into her eyes, he saw the halo around his reflected image enlarge, and under it appear not only the caption "benefactor," but also "comrade."

Just then John, having hung up the receiver, returned, and as he sat down and good-humoredly resumed the discussion of human suffering where he

had left it, Herndon perceived that young Mrs. Osborne answered with the reserved tolerance of experienced disillusionment the unreasoning optimism of the very young.

Once during the evening her eyes met his again.

"I am awfully fond of John," they told him. "I wouldn't change him for any other husband in the wide world. But I do wish that he understood. Perhaps if he had felt more—were a little older——"

Herndon smiled.

He realized perfectly that from that moment he was walking upon dangerous ground; dangerous because it had been part of his particular code of honor that the wife of a friend was not to be thought of.

To be sure, most of his friends' wives were "nice women." None of them had ever given him a second's uneasiness; none of them had been indiscreet enough to be enchantresses. Of course he ought to cease going to the Osbornes', to stop the whole business of "comprehending friendship" at once. But Elizabeth was beautiful, Elizabeth was clever, Elizabeth had a soul. He was more curious than he had ever been in his life, curious to see what would happen.

Not that anything vitally wrong could happen! Of course not! Was not John his friend, and Elizabeth good, and he himself an honorable man? Why, certainly! Of course!

He pooh-poohed all thought of real harm, while the exciting possibility of it never left his mind.

One side of his brain conveyed stern warnings of disapproval to the other side, which obligingly laughed them to scorn. Absurd to treat a friendship as if it were criminal! Why, he was fifty—fifty! Elizabeth was too much in love with her own husband, and too young, to receive any harm. He would drop in as usual, of course, to discuss—God.

Young Mrs. Osborne was never dull. She not only attended to her children, and went to the requisite number of "teas" during the winter, but she visited the various settlement houses of the city, took an interest in her laundress, and poked about in horrible streets swarming with unwashed, unattractive human beings. She was determined to find out just what life meant for the masses—and she was not pleased with her discoveries.

Twice a week, after having put one-half of his brain in the corner, Herndon found himself listening to her experiences and philosophizings, and assuring himself that it was quite all right. How could it be otherwise—with John eternally present and joining in the argument? Of course he would take the precaution of never going to the Osbornes' unless he knew that John was to be at home.

But one evening John was out of town, and a basket of Florida oranges was delivered at Herndon's establishment. Immediately he became obsessed with the notion that the Osborne children would like the oranges for breakfast. Therefore they should be delivered at once. After all, wasn't it insulting to a good and obviously devoted wife to make such a point of always requiring the chaperonage of her husband?

So, with one side of his brain scolding feebly and the other side fiercely exultant at having at last an opportunity to see Elizabeth alone, the oranges were stowed in the car and he drove to the Osbornes'.

He found her seated before the fire, gazing into the cheerful flames, obviously lonely; and as he removed his overcoat and came forward, both sides of his brain leaped at the look of joy on her face.

"How good of you to come!" she exclaimed. "The kiddies are tucked

away, and I was having ghastly thoughts all by myself."

"I was lonesome, too," he confessed, "and was glad to have the excuse of a newly arrived basket of oranges to bring you."

In a few moments she had relieved him of the fruit and had brought him some of John's cigars and seated him opposite her.

"At last! At last!" thumped his heart. He had had no idea how much he had longed for just such a chance; how much he had wanted to know what would happen if he had it.

But, after all, nothing very awful seemed to be happening.

There, beside the table with the shaded lamp, sat a very pretty woman, her wistful, questioning, brooding eyes sometimes on her sewing, sometimes on the middle-aged, important-looking personage seated decorously in the big chair opposite her. The clock pointed to half past eight. Surely a safe and sane hour! No chance observer could possibly have considered the little scene at all improper. Certainly it looked conventionality itself.

But the atmosphere was full of electricity. As Herndon struck the match that was to light his cigar, his fingers shook. Elizabeth began to talk with rapid nervousness. She recounted her adventures during the day—told about her visit to a poor widow who had struggled along to support her three children after her husband had been killed by the overturning of a caldron of liquid steel.

"Think of it!" exclaimed Elizabeth. "After he was buried, she was left with only three dollars in the house—three dollars! She got a position in one of the big office buildings at once—scrub-woman, of course. All night long she scrubbed those floors, and it only paid her house rent. She had to do day work besides—just to eat. She washed other people's clothes and cleaned their

rooms for them. She used to get about three hours of sleep in the twenty-four, and frequently she would talk and laugh all the way home—out loud, you know—to the people her poor, bewildered brain conjured up to keep her company. No, she wasn't insane, just tired. Think of what her life was! Just one long horror! And she was so overworked and so tired that she developed tuberculosis. And so—she is going to die—just because she hadn't enough money to take a rest in time!"

As he lit his cigar, Herndon's sympathetic murmur was quite sincere; his sympathies were easily aroused, and he was half ashamed of the expectant smile that turned up the corners of his mustache. Elizabeth was such a charming woman child.

"What are the three children going to do?" he questioned gravely.

"Ah, poor things!" Elizabeth launched into a vivid picturing of the horrors that awaited them. Then suddenly she stopped; two big tears coursed down her face.

"Oh, why are such things allowed?" she cried. "The world is terrible!"

Herndon nodded. His dark eyes were fixed on the quivering, mobile face before him. She was lovely—an enchantress with a soul. He could feel the blood pounding in his ears. But his voice was calmly melancholy when he spoke.

"Yes," he said. "Sometimes existence seems very dark. The stygian blackness of it—is ghastly. Mill was right when he declared that God was either not all powerful—or not all good. And yet to lose God is—horrible."

As his words trailed out, Elizabeth rose to her feet. One hand clutched her heart, her eyes were wide and horror-stricken. Her vivid imagination pictured a captainless ship plunging down to utter darkness.

"You are right!" she gasped. "That is the only explanation. Oh—I am so

lonely—in this horrible world without a God!"

She stumbled over and put her shaking hands in his. She felt her reeling ship breaking before the typhoon of doubt that his grave words had conjured up, and she wanted the comfort of a human touch.

But as her trembling fingers slipped into his, nature spoke. With throbbing temples and bursting hearts they stood staring at each other, their veins on fire. When they kissed, they were only doing what they had to. But they kissed, and kissed again.

Suddenly into the chaos of the universe came a sound. A door banged. White-faced and trembling, they sprang apart. Elizabeth sank into a chair, with the sudden realization that if she had lost God—she still had a husband.

With a shaking hand, Herndon picked up his cigar and strove to puff the dead ashes into life. Assuredly, if the universe was rudderless, convention still drove men.

"Hello, darling!" The master of the house entered radiantly, shaking the snow from his shoulders. "I made a frantic effort to catch the flyer—and managed to cut my journey short four hours. Ah, you here, Herndon? Good!"

He gripped Herndon's limp hand, and, bending forward, kissed his wife's cheek.

"Kids all right? Well, this is nice!" he added genially.



When they kissed, they were only doing what they had to.

Elizabeth staggered to her feet.

"Mr. Herndon brought us some perfectly wonderful oranges, John," she said, trying pitifully to speak naturally. "I'll get you some and make you both a cup of coffee. You must be cold."

"Well—coffee would taste good!" John sank into Elizabeth's vacant chair. "While you are getting it ready, I'll tell the boss, here, what I was able to get out of the street-railway company. How fortunate that you were here!" He smiled at Herndon as he plunged into the details of his trip, so happily shortened.

After a while Elizabeth brought in the coffee and a plate of cinnamon cakes. John noticed that she was very quiet; probably tired, poor dear.

Herndon was quiet also. It must be hard on the poor fellow to be only the looker-on at other people's domestic bliss. To be sure, a luxurious limousine

would come for him soon. But what was a limousine without an Elizabeth to share it? The thought was so distressing that John became especially cordial out of pity for his friend's loneliness, and urged him not to venture out in the cold—to stay all night.

"You ought to see what excellent breakfasts Elizabeth gives me!" he suggested hospitably.

But Herndon insisted on going home, and avoided Elizabeth's eyes. When he shook hands, he did so perfunctorily, and Elizabeth sickened at the coldness of his touch. Her color came and went, and she thought she would die of shame.

As for Herndon, before he had left his young partner's house, the curious psychical reaction that is apt to come at such times was well on.

Naturally he felt that Elizabeth was greatly to blame. What did a "nice woman" mean by being an enchantress? How could any man hope to resist her? And when a woman comes and puts her hands into yours and looks up with her eyes full of tears, the least a gentleman can do is to kiss her! She had tempted him, and for the first time in his life he had broken his code—he had made love to a friend's wife. He was ashamed.

Young Mrs. Osborne spent three days of anguish before she saw him again. And then fate ruled that they should be left alone once more. When John announced that he would have to be gone for an hour, Herndon amazed him by offering to accompany him.

"What on earth for?" asked John. "It's horribly cold outside, you have a fire here, and Elizabeth can keep you amused. Besides, I think I could get through sooner without you."

Elizabeth accompanied her husband to the door. Herndon could hear the conjugal parting kiss. When she returned—cold, faltering, trembling—she found the senior partner of her husband's firm elaborately busy over his

cigar. It seemed to give him a lot of trouble.

She braced herself against the mantelpiece, and stood silently regarding him. The clock ticked loudly. The silence of the two human beings in the room at last became tragic—and unbearable. Herndon lifted his head.

"My dear Mrs. Osborne," he said, "whatever is the matter?"

But Elizabeth, shaking, quivering, had her hands in his again.

"Oh, don't look so! Don't act so!" she begged. "You make me feel as if you thought I was bad! I can't bear to be bad! I am not bad!"

Again Herndon heard his heart hammering in his ears.

"Of course I don't think anything so silly!" he murmured.

And again he kissed her, and made more love to her—and then hated her for making him do it.

It went on that way. Elizabeth's world had gone to pieces about her ears, and because she yearned so desperately for the spar of human companionship, as she whirled giddily about in the black, engulfing waters, she clung, afraid and ashamed, to the only other being who knew she was there—and he would fain have cast her off.

Herndon passed his days in somewhat lesser misery. He feared being found out, he hated what he had done, and he despised Elizabeth.

She, poor girl, lived in torment. Her pretty color left her. She jumped and quivered at the slightest sound. She loved her husband, and she was afraid to meet his eye. She was fascinated by Herndon and crushed by his knowledge of her. She had seen a boa constrictor devour a rabbit in a circus once; she thought that she was like the rabbit. But she wanted more than anything else in the world to snatch back her own vanished self-respect. She wanted Herndon to cease his crushing of her and comfort her by assuring her that

he cared for her—and that she was not bad.

And if she had not been his friend's wife, Herndon would certainly have given all the assurances desired—whether he believed them or not. But as it was, his soul sickened at the shattering of his code, and he let Elizabeth perceive that it sickened.

She feared that she was losing her mind. If she had been a Catholic, she would have gone to confession and been comforted. But she was a Protestant, and an unbelieving one at that. She did not even believe in God; at least she thought she didn't. It was the losing of God that had brought all this upon her. She thought she was a moral leper. She, who had scorned frail women all her life, had now come to this!

Herndon came to the house less and less. On the usual evenings he developed mysterious ailments—unforeseen engagements.

One morning John mentioned Herndon's curious behavior to his wife.

"I wonder whether he's wishing that he could dissolve partnership," he said meditatively. "I think I'll come right straight out and ask him. It's always best to be straightforward."

As soon as John left the house, Elizabeth ran to the telephone.

That night Herndon came, and young Mrs. Osborne had the agony of seeing him avoid her.

"My wife's not looking very fit, is she?" John observed, with sudden anxiety, as Elizabeth bent over the teapot.

Her heart almost stopped beating as Herndon muttered something about a change being good for every one. So he wanted to get rid of her! He despised her so that he did not want even to see her about! She wished that she were dead.

For an insane moment she contemplated confessing to her husband. But as suddenly she realized that she could

not do that. It was not fair to burden him with her sins. No, she must bear them and get rid of them herself.

As she looked at John she realized afresh how good and honest and wholesome he was. Somewhere in the universe there was certainly a force of righteousness that he had laid hold of. Along with undoubted misery, cruelty, and injustice there must be goodness, justice, and unselfishness. She could see the manifestation of all three in John.

"He is not weak, either," she reflected. "I'm sure it was simply the knowledge of his absolute dependability that swung the street-lighting case to our firm." Her hands shook so that she spilled the tea into the saucer. "If I could only be like him!" she thought humbly. "But I am soiled."

It was the constant, dreary sense of guilt that was driving her mad.

"John," she asked that evening, after the big limousine had folded Herndon to its stringy bosom and chugged importantly away, "did you know that Billy boy broke your razor this afternoon? He used it to chop up Betty's Noah's ark. Did he confess it to you? He promised me he would."

John laughed.

"Yes. It was like Billy. He came into the room and stuck his hands into his pockets—with his legs wide apart—you know his funny way—and announced: 'I've broke your razor, daddy. I 'spect you'll never forgive me. But I won't do it again—and I'll forgive myself!'"

"Rather unrepentant, don't you think?" faltered Elizabeth, drawing a deep breath.

"No, merely sensible! The thing was done; he was sorry; so he wiped the slate clean and started afresh. Why, that's just what Nature does each spring. She turns the death of winter into life—uses it. Billy's a true philosopher. It's morbid to grieve too much



"I'll be your friend, too, just as I was before—if you will have me," she announced.

over sins that are past and should be done with. Billy fancied that I'd be silly enough not to forgive him, so he very sensibly forgave himself and left it all behind him."

A great light broke on Elizabeth's mind.

Herndon was amazed at the change in young Mrs. Osborne the next time he saw her. She neither sought nor avoided him. When she looked at him, there was no longer guilt or pleading in her eyes; they were clear, healthy,

fearless. And when he looked in them, he could see no picture of himself—only wholesome good-fellowship.

He wondered at it. Upon the second visit he began to feel annoyed. Before many days were over, he was maneuvering to get a word alone with her, to discover what had changed her. Something had; that was certain. Her color had come back, and she was prettier than ever.

He invited the Osbornes to dinner and left word with an anxious client to call John up about eight. He knew that the conversation would be apt to be a long one.

The instant John had disappeared into the hall, where the telephone was, Herndon turned upon Elizabeth.

"Have you told him?" he demanded.

"Only his subconscious self," was the astonishing reply. "Do you suppose I would hurt him so?" After a pause she added: "I am clean."

"Prayed?" Herndon could not keep the sneer out of his voice.

Elizabeth nodded brightly.

"Yes, prayed—but not in the way you mean. You wouldn't understand. But it's quite all right between me and my husband. We love each other. I can't explain it to you—but it's true. I'm back where I used to be. We are the same dear friends, and my slate is clean."

She leaned forward and looked into Herndon's puzzled eyes.

"I'll be your friend, too, just as I was before—if you will have me," she announced. And Herndon found himself thinking irrelevantly that she

looked like a queen who had taken a crown in her own hands and crowned herself.

"Whose troubles are you two looking so solemn about now?" asked John when he came back from the telephone.

Elizabeth laughed a little.

"Mr. Herndon was telling me about a husband and wife and the '*tertium quid*.' The woman, it seems, beguiled the poor man, and he hated her for it—as they always do, John."

"Dear me! Why, this is worse than usual!" smiled John.

"The point was," proceeded Mrs. Osborne, "that the woman who beguiled—and so stained herself—reached out into the unknown and somehow or other dipped herself into the power that makes for righteousness, and— Oh, you finish the story, Mr. Herndon! What happened to the poor, hated lady? I don't think you told me."

John was not paying much attention.

His mind was still on the intricacies of his telephone conversation. But he said as he seated himself:

"Yes, what became of the '*tertium quid*'?"

A dark flush mounted to Herndon's forehead; he felt as if he could hear the sea roaring. He stared passionately into Elizabeth's eyes.

"The '*tertium quid*' discovered that he loved her." His voice became suddenly hoarse and broke. He knew that he was speaking the truth.

"Silly '*tertium quid*'!" said Elizabeth gently. "His last state was worse than his first, wasn't it? So stupid of him to mistake desire for the unattainable—for love!"

Her eyes sought and found her husband's as she finished. Love! They had it. And underneath the cover of a newspaper John squeezed his wife's hand, feeling full of sympathy for poor, unloved, lonely Herndon.



Two Stars

EVENING star, serenely set
On the lovely breadth of sky,
Just as sun and dusk have met—
When the humming moths go by
Brushing dew beads from the rose
As a sauntering lover might—
Ah, my love, at day's sweet close,
Sure it gleams for our delight.

But, before the morning's gray,
Rises up its glorious twin.
Like a torch it leads the day
Where are valiant fields to win;
Heartens us for noble strife
As a morning prayer might do.
Ah, my sweet, it lights my life,
Thrills me like my love for you!
JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

The MYSTERY OF FORTESCUE



By EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

Author of "Percy Minimus and His Tommy," "The Revenge," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY V. SANDBERG

MY name is Abbott, and I came to Merivale two years ago. I have got one leg an inch and three-quarters shorter than the other; but I make nothing of it. A nurse dropped me on a fender when I was just born, owing to a mouse suddenly running across her foot. It was more a misfortune than anything, and my mother forgave her freely. When I was old enough, I also forgave her. In fact, I only mention it to explain why I am not going into the army. All Abbotts do so, and it will be almost a record my going into something else. It is hard luck, you may say, because the fighting spirit is very strong in me, and when the great war began and I could not even go into the school corps, I felt it harder than ever.

Many chaps have no fighting spirit, and, as a rule, it is not strong in schoolmasters; yet when the call came for men, three out of our five answered it and went. Two, who were well up in the Terriers, got commissions, and the other enlisted; so we were only left with Brown, who can't see farther than a pink-eyed rat and isn't five-foot-three in his socks—though in his high-heeled boots he may be—and Fortescue.

You will say this must have had a pretty bright side for us, and, at first sight, no doubt it looks hopeful. In fact, we took a very cheerful view of it, because you can do what you like

with Brown, and Fortescue only teaches the fifth and sixth. Even Briggs, who is not sanguine about life in a general way, said it was an ill wind that blows nobody any good; and the thought of the situation at Merivale balanced the other triumphant thought of my father being at the front. But only for a time.

On the day that Hutchings cleared out, to go to India with the Fourth Devons, and we were left with only Fortescue, Brown, and the doctor, we were confronted with serious news. In fact, after chapel on that day, we heard, much to our anxiety, that old Dunston himself was going to fill the breach.

Those were his very words. He talked with a sort of ghastly facetiousness and used military terms.

He said:

"Now that our valued and honored friends, Mr. Hutchings, Mr. Manwaring, and Mr. Meadows, have answered to their nation's call, with a loyalty to king and country inevitable in men who know the demands as well as the privileges of empire, it behooves us, as we can and how we can, to fill their honored places. This, then, is my contribution to the great war. I shall fight in no foreign trenches, but labor here, sleeplessly if need be, and undertake willingly, proudly, the arduous task that they have left behind. I shall face no cannon, but the lower school. Henceforth, after that amalgamation of class

and class which will be necessary, you may count upon your head master to answer the trumpet call and fill the breach. But I do not disguise from myself that such labors must prove no sinecure, and I trust the least as well as the greatest to do their part and aid me with such good sense and intelligence as it has pleased God to bestow upon them."

Well, there it was; and we saw in a moment that you can't escape the horrors of war, even though you are on an island with the grand fleet between you and the foe.

When it came to the point, the doctor was fairly friendly, but there was always something about him that was awful and solemn and very depressing to the mind. You could crib easily enough with him, for he had a much more trustful disposition than Hutchings or Brown or Fortescue, and was also shortsighted at near range; but the general feeling with the doctor was a sense of weariness and undoubted relief when it was over. It was as near like being in church as anything could be. He knew such a frightful lot of learning that he simply wouldn't come down to our level, and he always began by giving us credit for tons of general information which, of course, we hadn't got. Then, when he found we hadn't got it, he felt surprised. Beginning at the beginning of things bored him. In fact, he often found, when he went back to the very start of a subject, he'd forgotten it himself, moving for so many years on only the higher walks of learning; and then, finding that he had forgotten some footling trifle on the first page of a primer, he became abstracted and lost heart about it and seemed more inclined to think than to talk.

Another very curious habit he had was to start on one thing—say Latin—and then drift off into something else—say geography. Or he might begin with

algebra, and then something would remind him of the procession of the equinoxes, or the nebula in Orion, and he would soar from earth and wander among the heavenly bodies until the class was over. And if he happened to be very much interested himself, he wouldn't let it be over; and then we had to sit on, hearing the doctor maundering about double stars, or comets, perhaps, while everybody else was in the playground. I think he got rather sick of the lower school after about a month of it, and Fortescue took over a good many of the classes in his normal style, which was more businesslike than the doctor and more punctual in its working. He was cold and hadn't much use for us in school or out, but he was just, and we had liked him pretty well until the mystery began. Then we gradually got to dislike him, and then despise him, and then hate him.

He was rather out of the common in a way, being an honorable and related to the famous family of Fortescue, which has shone a good deal in history off and on. And, of course, when the war broke out, we naturally expected that the Honorable Howard Fortescue would seize the opportunity to shine also, which he could not do as an under-master at Merivale. He was a big, fine man, six feet high, with a red complexion and a Roman nose. Certainly he did not play games, but he was all right in other ways and had been a lawn-tennis player of the first class in past times at Oxford, and, in fact, got his half-blue for playing at that sport against Cambridge.

So it seemed to us pretty low down that he didn't join Kitchener's army. As a matter of fact, he didn't even try to. He was a very reserved sort of man, and not what you might call friendly to us, yet if anybody appealed to him in any sort of way, he generally thawed a bit and responded in quite a kind

manner. We argued a good deal about him, and Travers Major said it was natural pride, because, being of the family of Fortescue, he knew there was a gulf fixed between him and us. And Travers did not blame him, and more did I, or Briggs. But Rice, who is Irish and who had got had up on the report of Fortescue for saying, as he thought, something disrespectful about the British army, hated Fortescue with a deadly hatred. Which was natural, because Fortescue had misunderstood, and Rice had really said nothing against the army, but against Protestants, which, being a Roman Catholic himself, was merely his point of view and no business of Fortescue's. But Rice had to learn the Battle of Waterloo out of the "Student's Hume," by heart, and that decided him to work a deadly revenge on Fortescue the first time he got the chance.

And when Fortescue wouldn't become a soldier, Rice left no stone unturned, as they say, to worry him about it. At that time Milly Dunston, the doctor's youngest daughter, had just come back from a school where she had been finished, and Rice's sister was at the same school, so she took notice of Rice. And it soon turned out that Milly Dunston also hated Fortescue. I believe he had snubbed her in some way over English literature, at which Fortescue was said to be a flyer, but Milly Dunston was not. She had, in fact, praised a novel to him, and he had laughed and told her it was quite worthless, and advised her to read some novels by people she had never heard of. And then he had slighted the school where she had finished.

And so, when Rice explained that Fortescue was a coward and preferred the comparative comfort of Merivale to the manly business of going to Salisbury Plain and living in tents and becoming useful to the empire, Milly Dunston quite agreed with Rice and

said something ought to be done about it. We helped, because we thought the same. In fact, everybody seemed to be of the same opinion, and little by little Fortescue began to see signs of great unpopularity growing up against him.

At first he ignored these signs, being evidently unprepared to take what you might call a delicate sort of hint. For instance, he smoked a pipe and kept a Japanese vase on the mantelpiece of his study full of black crows' feathers, which he was in the habit of picking up on Merivale heath, where he often went for lonely walks. With these feathers, he cleaned out the stem of his pipe. Well, Milly Dunston bought a white fowl for the doctor's dinner and told the man at the shop to send it without plucking the feathers off. Which he did do, and she got them and gave them to Rice, who dexterously took away Fortescue's black feathers and substituted the white ones. But Fortescue went on just as if he hadn't noticed it, and when Saunders was with Fortescue, having his special coaching lesson for a civil-service exam, he said that Fortescue took a white feather and cleaned his pipe with it as if quite indifferent to the color.

Then Milly Dunston got a ball of knitting wool and four knitting needles, for all of which she paid herself, and Rice once more did the necessary strategy and arranged them on Fortescue's desk, where his eyes would fall upon them on returning to his study. But they merely disappeared, and Fortescue gave no sign.

Then Travers Major started a very interesting theory on the subject, and he said there must be some reason far deeper than mere cowardice behind the mystery of Fortescue. He said that it was impossible for a Fortescue to be a coward in the common or garden sense of finking danger; but he admitted that he might be a coward in some other way, such as not liking discipline, or



With these feathers, he cleaned out the stem of his pipe.

living in a tent, or wearing uncomfortable clothes, or getting up early to the sound of a bugle. And Briggs said that he thought perhaps Fortescue was keeping a widowed mother and sisters, or an old aunt, or some such person, by his exertions at Merivale; in which case, of course, he couldn't go.

But Rice didn't see why not, even if it was so; and more did I, because the government gives full compensation for women relations in general. But Briggs said I had got it all wrong and that if

Fortescue had an aunt, she wouldn't gain a penny by his going to the war, however old and poor she was. In fact, he believed that only a wife who was going to have a baby got anything at all.

Then Rice said that it didn't make any difference to his deadly feeling against Fortescue, even if he had fifty women and children depending on him. And he also said that he was going on rubbing it into Fortescue and leaving no stone unturned to make his life a

burden to him until he enlisted. And Travers Major said that Rice was feeling the instinct of pure revenge; and Rice said it might be, but that was what he intended to do.

Then we divided into two factions on the subject of Fortescue, and one faction decided to leave him to his conscience and mind its own business, which wasn't driving Fortescue to war; while the other side took the opposite course and decided to work at Fortescue with the utmost ingenuity until, in sheer despair, he was driven to do his duty. And Briggs and Travers Major and Travers Minor and Saunders and Hopwood abandoned the pursuit, so to say; while I and Rice and a chap called Mitchell, all ably assisted by Milly Dunston, continued in our great attempt to wake Fortescue to the call of his country and storm his lines, as Rice said.

As for Mitchell, he came into it rather curiously, and it shows how an utter accident will sometimes reveal a person in their true colors and surprise other people, who thought they knew them and yet didn't. Mitchell was a mere rabbit in character and nothing in learning. And in fact he only had one feature besides his nose, and that was his love for money. Money, you might say, was his god, and his financial operations in the matter of loans to the kids were a study in themselves. But over Fortescue he came out in a most unexpected manner, and, much to our surprise, made up a bit of poetry about him! Which shows nothing happens but the unexpected, and nobody was more astonished, in a sort of way, than Mitchell himself, because he never knew he could do it. In fact, springing into fame in a moment like this made him rather light-headed, and though he naturally went up a good deal in our opinion, he went down in his class and made some mistakes in arithmetic that fairly staggered Brown, who thought very

highly of Mitchell in that department of work, though in no other.

Mitchell explained his failure by saying it was the war, and it was true, of course, because if it hadn't been for the war, Fortescue wouldn't have had to go to it; and if he hadn't hung fire and shirked doing his duty, then we shouldn't have had to attack him; and then Mitchell wouldn't have made up his stirring poem. He swore it had taken him a week and kept him awake every night during that time; and very likely it did. And even then it was a very great performance for Mitchell, and many of the sixth said it showed a slight touch of poetry in Mitchell. And Milly Dunston fairly loved it, and turned Rice slightly jealous in a way; because, after the splutter made over Mitchell, he tried to invent a poem, too, in secret, and, of course, failed.

How to use the poem to the best purpose was a question that Milly solved. She typed it by night on her own typewriter and then directed Rice at the first opportunity to put it on Fortescue's desk, when his study was empty. And he did so, and this is what Fortescue found awaiting him when he returned:

You ask us lots of questions
And we answer if we can,
And now we'll jolly well ask you one.
You call yourself a man;
Then why on earth don't you enlist
And try to do your share
Where the "Black Marias" bellow
And the shrapnel's in the air?
And if you will not tell us why,
Then we'll tell you instead.
It's just because you funk it
And would hate to be shot dead.
In other words, in fact, in one,
Most Honorable Howard,
Though of the race of Fortescue,
You are a bally coward!

We didn't much envy Fortescue his feelings when he read these stirring lines, and, in fact, I, in my hopefulness, believed they would actually win our object and start Fortescue on the path of duty and rouse him from his lethar-

gical attitude to the war. But, strange to say, they went off him like water off a duck's back. Not a muscle moved, so to speak; or, if it did, nobody saw it do so. He went on his way for all the world as if civilization was not in its death throes. And then Rice—to show you what Rice still felt about it—offered Mitchell a week's pocket money if he would write yet another poem of even a more fiery and stinging character. And Mitchell gladly agreed and took enormous trouble and burned the midnight oil, as the saying is, and produced certainly a poem full of rhymes and great abuse of Fortescue, yet not nearly such a fine poem as the first.

And Rice said it wasn't up to the mark and wouldn't pay for it, and Mitchell said it was a contract and written on commission and must be paid for by law. But Rice knew no law, and he showed the poem to Travers Major, who instantly tore it up and kicked Mitchell next time he met him and told him he was a dirty little cad. So Mitchell cooled off to Rice, and, in fact, his next poem was actually about Rice—not written to order, but for pure hate of Rice. And it was undoubtedly a bitter and powerful poem; but Rice, being far stronger than Mitchell, made him eat it and swallow it in front of his class. And Mitchell said if he died, Rice would be hung. But he felt no ill effects, though he rather hoped he would.

At this season, however, a far greater and more splendid poem than any Mitchell could do had appeared in England. In fact, it was set to music and England rang with it—also Ireland. At least so Rice said, because his mother had told him so in a letter. There was a special mention of Ireland in it, and Rice's mother told him that it had made more recruits in Ireland than Mr. Redmond and Sir Edward Carson put together. Rice never does anything by halves, and he actually learned the poem

by heart and also found out the tune somehow and sang it when possible. Once, in fact, he woke up in the night singing it from force of habit, as the saying is, and his prefect, who happened to be Mactaggert, said there was a time for everything and threatened to report Rice if he did it again.

I asked Rice why he had made such a great effort and learned anything he wasn't obliged to learn, and he said firstly, because it was the grandest poem he had ever heard, and secondly, because he had a great idea some day to sing it to Fortescue, as it applied specially to him by dwelling on the fearfulness of hanging fire when the empire cried out for you. The poem said that the empire was calling to every one of her sons of low and high degree, and so, of course, it was also calling to Fortescue. And Rice thought that as it was pretty certain Fortescue wouldn't read it, and no doubt fought shy of patriotic poetry in general just now, he meant to wait for some happy opportunity, when Fortescue was not in a position to get out of earshot, and sing it to him.

But the opportunity did not come, so Rice adopted the former plan of leaving the poem in Fortescue's room. He had plenty of printed copies of the words, because the great poem, after first appearing in the *Times*, had been copied, at the special wish of the author, into hundreds and thousands of other papers. And to show you the tremendous liking people had for it, even the Merivale *Weekly Trumpet* printed it, and Milly Dunston found it there.

She, by the way, had had another pretty bitter cut at Fortescue, which had cost more money, and she told Rice she had paid five shillings and sixpence for her great insult. In fact, she sent Fortescue a shawl and a cap such as is worn by aged women, with red, white, and blue ribbons in it. Which, of course, meant that Fortescue was an



And after his name he wrote the grim words, "his blood."

old woman himself. It was frightfully deadly, if you understood it, and Rice said that only a girl could have thought of such a cruel thing. The parcel was sent by post; but once more we were doomed to disappointment, as they say, for nothing came of it except slight advantage to the matron in Fortescue's house. In fact, he gave her the five-shilling shawl. But the cap we never saw again, and doubtless it was burned to a cinder in Fortescue's fire.

Then Rice tried the patriotic poem, and so as there should be no mistake, he covered the back of it with "Stick-plast" paste, and in this manner fastened it very firmly to the looking-glass just behind the spot where Fortescue kept his pipes on the mantelpiece.

We didn't hope much from it, and expected he would merely scrape it off

and take it lying down in his usual cowardly manner. But imagine our immense surprise when we found he had sneaked to the doctor! And even that was nothing compared to the extraordinary confession that he had made to the doctor. And it all came out, and, as Mitchell said, a bolt from the blue fell on him and me and Rice.

After stating the facts of the case, which were that Mr. Fortescue had been, from the beginning of the term, subject to a great deal of annoyance from boys who labored under the offensive delusion that he ought to go to the front, the doctor said:

"It is my honored friend, Mr. Fortescue's, wish that I inform you of the circumstances which prevent an action that he would have been the first to take did his physical welfare permit

of it. But unhappily he suffers from an enlarged aorta, and it is impossible for him to take his place in our line of defenses, though that impossibility has caused him the sorrow of his life. It happens, however, that nature has blessed Mr. Fortescue with abundant gifts, while denying him his health, and in the pages of that work of reference known as 'Who's Who'—pages that I fear few of you will ever adorn—may be found the distinguished name of the Honorable Howard Fortescue in connection with notable achievements. For Mr. Fortescue is a votary of the Muses. Already he has two volumes of verse to his credit and three works of fiction; while in a subsequent addition of the volume, it will doubtless be recorded that he was the author of a certain admirable poem which has recently stirred the United Kingdom to its depths and sent more young men to the enlisting stations than any other inspiration of the time.

"But it was, it seems, left for one of my pupils to combine idiocy with insolence and affix a copy of his own immortal composition to Mr. Fortescue's looking-glass! This was positively the last straw, and my esteemed colleague, who up to the present time has allowed his sense of humor to ignore your insufferable impertinences, felt that it was bad for yourselves to proceed farther upon so perilous a path. Very rightly, therefore, he called my attention to a persecution I should have thought impossible within these walls.

"He has no desire to give me the names of the culprits, and it is well for them that he has not. But he having placed the whole circumstances in my hands, I cannot permit the outrage to pass without recording my abhorrence and shame. I may further remind you that Wednesday next is our half-term whole holiday, and if before that date no private and abject apology is committed to the hands of Mr. Fortescue

by those who have disgraced themselves and put this affront upon him—if that is not done, and if I do not hear from him that he is thoroughly satisfied with the nature of that expression of regret, then there will be no half-term whole holiday, and righteous and guilty alike will suffer."

Needless to say, this tremendous speech made a very great impression on me and Rice and Mitchell. Milly Dunston did not hear it, but it made a great impression on her, too, when she heard the facts, and we felt, in a way, that she was a good deal to blame, because she could easily have looked up "Who's Who," being free of the doctor's library, which we were not.

Of course, there was no difficulty about the apology, which I wrote with help from Mitchell; but, showing what girls are, though she had invented most of the things we did to Fortescue, and spent all the necessary money out of her own pocket, she still calmly refused to sign the apology and said she would apologize personally to him. No doubt she didn't, and Rice, who felt it fearfully, chucked her afterward. Of course, Mitchell and I felt it, too, and so did Travers Major and Travers Minor and Briggs and Saunders. In fact, they were quite willing to sign the apology if it was written again by them. But this we refused, because we had written a particularly good apology and because we felt we had really been the great enemies of Fortescue, and not they.

Rice was the most cut up. He said he should never feel the same again after being such a simple beast, and he changed over from hating Fortescue to thinking him the most wonderful and splendid man in the world, and far the best poet after Shakespeare. And to show how frightfully Rice feels things and the rash way he goes on, I can only tell you that when we signed the apology, he cut himself on his arm, just

above the wrist, and got two drops of blood and signed with them. And after his name he wrote the grim words, "his blood," so that Fortescue shouldn't think it was merely red ink.

The apology went like this:

We, the undersigned members of the lower fourth form of Merivale, beg to express our great regret for having tried to make the Honorable Howard Fortescue go to the front. We freely confess we ought not to have done so, and that we were much deluded. We utterly did not know that he had got an aorta, and we are very sorry that he has, and we hope that he will soon recover from it. And we beg to say that we think his poem the best poem we have ever read, and also better than Vergil. And we hope that he will overlook it on this occasion, and

are willing to do anything he may decide upon to show the extent of our great regret.

(Signed) RUPERT MITCHELL.
PATRICK RICE (HIS BLOOD).
ARTHUR ABBOTT.

But nothing came of it. The Honorable Fortescue went on his way quite unmoved and treated us just as usual, without any sign of forgiveness or otherwise. And whether he ever reported our names to Dunston or not, we never knew. But I don't think he did. At any rate, he must have said the apology was enough, which it certainly was. And the end justified the means, as they say, because the whole holiday at half-term passed off as usual.

A Light Bringer

"LIGHT through Work" is the motto that you will see inscribed on a tall white house in East Fifty-ninth Street, New York. And this exactly describes the work that the "Lighthouse" is doing.

It began in a very small way some ten years ago, as a ticket bureau for the blind to which managers gave unsold seats for theaters, concerts, and operas, the idea of a woman, Miss Winifred Holt. Soon after this, Miss Holt opened her own home as a place where blind women were taught typewriting, basketry, and rug weaving, and the men broom making; but the work grew under her hands to such enormous proportions that she soon realized the necessity of having a permanent and well-equipped place where the blind could meet for work and play.

Through her untiring efforts, she managed to interest a number of people, and the Lighthouse, of which she had dreamed, became a reality. It is the center for all the work that is done for the blind, and how imaginatively and lovingly this work is done is shown by the wide range of its activities. Its double aim is to make the blind independent and to make them happy through human fellowship and increased opportunities for enjoyment and self-expression. It has classes in massage, piano tuning, chair caning, knitting, crocheting, hand and machine sewing, hammock and rug weaving, typewriting, stenography, switch-board operating, reading, writing, music, physical culture, and dancing. It maintains various social and cultural clubs and a magazine, *The Searchlight*, which is sent to blind children throughout the country.

Its service to children is especially interesting. The Lighthouse Scouts and Campfire Girls meet regularly for drill and lessons in first aid to the injured, knot making, cooking, bead work, singing, dancing, athletics, and hygiene. At its summer home it entertains some three hundred of them during the hot weather.

Besides this, it maintains a clothing bureau, a ticket bureau, a shop for the sale of articles made by the blind, a clinic, and a social-service department. It has brought sunshine into many a darkened life, and though its funds are small and its expenses great, it is struggling cheerfully on to meet the ever-increasing volume of work to be done.

The Little Tike

by

Ben Ames Williams

DOCTOR GRIFFITH had presided at Johnny Hawkins' first bow to this somewhat hostile world, and he had helped Johnny across some rough places in the years since then; but he was not at all sure he could help now, and his eyes were proportionately grave. Johnny had come so that the doctor might examine a certain knee, weakened at football years before, which still gave occasional trouble; and from the knee the talk drifted to other matters. Doctor Griffith tilted back in his chair, fitted finger tip to corresponding finger tip in deliberate fashion, and listened.

"The Lord knows," said Johnny, huskily and devoutly, "that I'd have done anything—to save—the little tike. But now that he's gone, I'm darned if I'll let Anne just break her heart wanting him back."

"Yes," agreed the doctor. "Yes, sir." Doctor Griffith could cure most ailments just by the firm strength and reassurance of his voice, and it seemed to brace Johnny now.

"You've seen, doctor, how thin she's getting," the young man pursued. "I suppose if we had another baby, it would be different. But we haven't—



she's getting thinner and thinner."

"Yes," soothed the doctor. "Yes, we must stop that somehow."

"You see," explained Johnny awkwardly, as if the other might not understand. "You see, Anne just gave every minute to the little tike." He coughed brusquely. "She just studied all the time what to do for him, and trained him to eat and sleep and not to cry and all. And he was always so darned healthy and tickled with himself—that it made it all the harder when he—got sick—and sort of lost his chipper ways. Don't you see?"

"Yes, yes," said the doctor gruffly, and tipped his chair forward and twirled around to his desk and tapped upon a prescription pad with his stylographic pen. "Yes, yes." Then briskly: "I suppose you try to cheer her up—what?"

And at that, "Oh, good Lord!" cried the boy, and suddenly and quite frankly he buried his face in his hands.

"Hum!" growled the doctor, and waited a moment. "Now, let's see. Didn't you use to play tennis a good deal together?"

"Yes," muttered Johnny through his fingers. "Yes, we used to play a lot. The other evening I came home early

and asked her to play a set. She got ready—in a listless sort of way." He sat up straight and faced the physician. "Then all of a sudden she cried: 'Oh, Johnny, do you remember how he used to toddle around the court and chase the balls for us? Oh, Johnny, I can't! I can't!' And it took me all evening to get her quieted enough to go to sleep."

"Hum!" said the doctor again. "Now if we could revive that interest in tennis—get her to playing again—Hum! Hum! How about work? Does she do her own work?"

"Yes; it keeps her busy while I'm away during the day."

The doctor did not speak at once, and Johnny added wretchedly:

"She gets lonesome without me. But she won't go out with other people."

For a long time the doctor hummed and grumbled under his breath, like a teakettle about to boil. His eyes were out of the window, where all the world was hiding the shabby vestments of winter in the bright, new greenery of spring. At last he decided.

"Well, boy, it's not a case for me. Maybe she'll come around. If she had something to occupy her mind, now, she'd be all right in two shakes. Of course she will be, anyhow. But we must watch things." He hesitated. "Now if you could give her something to keep her busy." He chuckled in his beard. "I knew a woman once—baby died—she'd been sick herself, but I told her husband to give her work. He asked her to make him some shirts. She didn't know a damned thing about sewing. By the time she'd made six shirts, she was singing over her sewing machine and planning a new spring dress."

He rose abruptly, and Johnny likewise, and the doctor rested his hand on Johnny's shoulder.

"Buck up, son," he ordered. "You've got to do the grinning for two. See if you can't think of something. And

look out for that knee of yours. It wouldn't take much to lame you for another month. Good-by. I'll keep an eye on her. Good-by."

Anne was waiting for him at the corner, and her face lighted a little at sight of him, then dulled with the dreadful apathy of pain again. It was as if a dying ember had glowed for an instant to the warm kiss of a passing wind.

"You're late, dear," she chided softly. "I've been lonely for you."

"I—missed my train," lied Johnny. "Sorry, honey."

She took his arm and nodded silently to his quick questions as to her day's affairs. Once his gay tongue charmed a smile to her lips, but it was quickly gone. They entered the house—the silent house. The little tike had used to greet them babblingly at the door. Johnny swept her into his arms, and with his kiss, "It's fine and cool in here," he cried boisterously. "This is a mighty hot day for May."

"It is cool here," she agreed. "Very cool—and quiet—all day." She was helping him off with his coat, fetching his slippers, filling his pipe, busy with all the attentions she loved to pay to him.

He protested: "Don't tire yourself, honey." She pressed her fingers over his lips, and he felt how thin they were.

"You know I love it," she declared. "If I could just be waiting on you all the time, I'd be so happy!"

She was but a bit of a girl, and her lips had loved to lend themselves to laughter in the days before the little tike had died. And she was very much in love with Johnny—the awkward lout. Johnny's eyes followed her hoveringly. Presently she went to prepare supper, and he upstairs to remove the dust of the day. In their room, he saw that she had been rehangng the pictures, and the hammer and brass-headed nails were scattered over his chiffonier. He

picked up the hammer and smiled at it as if it were the woman he loved.

Anne was carrying a full platter into the dining room when she heard him fall, and for a moment she stood frozen with fright. Then her numb fingers dropped the platter, and it splintered about her feet. Still she stood, white, listening with her very soul for his voice; and after an eternity, it seemed, she heard him call:

"It's all right, Anne honey."

He was alive! She flew on wings to him, and cried aloud with pity and flooding love. He lay face downward, head downward on the stairs. One hand clung to the balusters.

"I f-fell," he carefully explained from where he lay. "Slipped on that d-darned top step."

"Oh, boy, boy!" she crooned, and tugged upward at his shoulders and helped him right himself. As he sat erect, he caught his knee between his hands and looked at it wryly.

"Ain't that the darnedest?" he mur-



"Ain't that the darnedest?" he murmured. "I've gone and banged that knee again."

mured. "I've gone and banged that knee again." He was quite white, and she supported him, a shoulder under his. And she whispered, "Johnny," and, "Johnny," over and over, for that was all she could say.

"My dear," he suggested gravely, "if you'll just ease me down to the floor so I can faint comfortably, I think you might telephone"—majestically he waved his free hand—"for a physician."

Murmuring her soft endearments, somehow she got him to the stair foot. But Johnny, spite of his promise, did not faint away. She telephoned—and when Doctor Griffith came, he found Johnny stretched upon the floor, his leg upon a pillow, and his head upon his wife's lap.

While Doctor Griffith labored with the knee, a puzzled frown upon his face, Anne must hold Johnny's hand. And she did. When, afterward, Doctor Griffith suggested a trained nurse, because Johnny would be helpless for a time, Anne demanded: "What would I be doing, please?" So Johnny was left in Anne's care.

And Anne throve on it. At times, it must be said, Johnny was a captious patient. The knee, cracked in an ancient scrimmage, had suffered heavily in Johnny's tumble, and with almost human malignity "took it out" on Johnny. But when Johnny was most captious, Anne was most adorably patient, ministering to him, talking to him, or leaving him alone when he seemed to wish it.

The knee was bad, quite bad; but it improved, and was cared for as never a knee was tended heretofore. And so it mended—till there came the day when Johnny laid aside his crutches and was able, with an excited Anne on one side and a smiling Doctor Griffith on the other, to reach a chair by the window. And Anne—no longer so pale or so unhappy or even so thin as she had been—danced in front of him and clapped her hands and cried: "Oh, Johnny, you look too good to be true!"

"Shucks!" said Johnny, and the doctor laughed and caught Anne's arm.

"Here's the miss you can thank, young man." She's slaved over you."

"Yes, I know." And Johnny's eyes made several remarks of an intimately personal nature to Anne's.

"He'll be walking in another week, won't he, doctor?" she asked.

"Pretty near," agreed the doctor.

"And he'll walk as well as ever?" she demanded eagerly.

"Better," the doctor promised. "Much better, to be sure."

"And we can take long tramps together, and—and—" She paused, eyes dancing, cheeks glowing. "And we can play tennis as we used?"

Tennis! Johnny looked at the doctor sheepishly, almost guiltily. And he tried to grin and felt as if his grin would crack. Even Doctor Griffith—all at that word "tennis"—was very careful to keep his voice steady as he answered: "Yes, all the tennis you want, my dears."

Anne just must kiss Johnny. Did the doctor mind? And with the kiss went a rib-cracking hug.

"But we'll have to have the court scraped and rolled," she remembered. "I'm going this minute and telephone Mr. Doherty to do it."

She was gone like a flash. Johnny looked at the doctor. And the doctor looked at Johnny. It was the first time they had been alone together since the accident—so close had Anne stayed at Johnny's side.

"She's looking better, don't you think?" Johnny hazarded.

"Splendidly. She's the girl she used to be—made over. That knee was hard on you, but it was the making of her."

"Yes, sir," said Johnny.

"Hum!" muttered the doctor. "Johnny, I never did understand just how you happened to fall that day. That knee looked as if it had been banged with a hammer. Most peculiar accident."

"Why, yes, sir," said Johnny, ever so readily. "Darnedest thing I ever saw. The last I knew I was at the head of the stairs. Then my foot slipped and—blam! And there you are!" He waved a lucid hand.

"Ah—humph!" coughed the doctor, most emphatically. "Exactly. And it cured her. Shake hands, boy. I've got to get along."

For a Mess of Pottage

by
Helen R. Martin



Author of "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "Barnabetta," "Martha of the Mennonite Country," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Margaret Berkeley, daughter of an old and distinguished Southern family, finds that her position in the household of her married sister, Harriet Eastman, is intolerable. Walter, Harriet's husband, cannot conceal his admiration for his young sister-in-law, and Margaret can see that Harriet is jealous. Margaret has had an unusual education, having been for eight years the exclusive companion of her eccentric old uncle, Osmond Berkeley, a famous psychologist; but she has had no training that would enable her to earn her own living, and she has no money, her uncle having left his fortune to found a college. She and her sister, however, are the joint owners of Berkeley Hall, the old family estate, and Margaret asks Walter to raise a little money for her on this, that she may fit herself for self-support. Walter, with the Southerner's objection to a self-supporting woman, tries to find another solution for Margaret's problem by bringing home Mr. Leitzel, a business acquaintance from the North. Daniel Leitzel, of the Pennsylvania Dutch town of New Munich, is a wealthy bachelor of forty-five—mean, grasping, and narrow-minded. He and his elder sisters, Jennie and Sadie, who live with him, and his brother Hiram were the children of a poor farmer who, dying in Daniel's babyhood, left his family to be brought up by his second wife, the children's stepmother. Her heroic efforts kept them together until coal was discovered on the farm; whereupon, leaving their stepmother in poverty, the Leitzels bent all their energies to rising in the world. Danny, a Harvard graduate and a successful lawyer, is the family pride. Margaret's beauty and distinction completely captivate Daniel, in spite of his habitual caution. He proposes, and she accepts him, simply as a way out of her difficulties. The marriage is hastened, and she returns with him to New Munich, where she is to live with her two sisters-in-law. Her new family's narrow, snobbish standards and inability to recognize any social qualifications but money are a revelation to her. To their dismay, she makes friends with her husband's secretary, Catherine Hamilton, a charming, cultured girl, who is, however, beyond the pale in their eyes because she works for her living.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT was not until the hour for leaving Millerstown, when Margaret was taken by her hostess to an upstairs bedroom to rearrange her hair before starting, that she and Hiram's wife were given an opportunity for a word together. What, then, was her chagrin to have Lizzie at once take up her hus-

band's eulogistic harangue where he had left it off.

"Daniel and Jennie and Sadie always say their New Munich preacher seems so slow and uninteresting after they've heard Hiram. I guess you'll think, too, next Sunday, their minister's a poor preacher toward what Hiram is."

"I don't go to church *every* Sunday.

To tell you the truth, Lizzie, I'm not awfully fond of sermons."

"Oh, ain't you? I do like a good sermon, the kind Hiram preaches."

"You never get tired of them?"

"Not of Hiram's!" said Lizzie, shocked.

"Of course not of Hiram's," Margaret hastily concurred.

"Does Danny insist you go along to the U. B. church, or do you attend the Episcopal?"

"The Episcopalians are trying to gather me into their fold, and Daniel seems to want me to go there."

"It's so much more tony than at the U. B. church," nodded Lizzie understandingly. "Yes, Danny often said, already, that if he hadn't a brother that is a U. B. preacher, he'd join to the Episcopal. But it wouldn't look nice for him to leave the U. B.'s, when Hiram's a minister of the U. B. church, would it?"

"It wouldn't look nice for him to leave it for the other reason you mentioned."

"That the Episcopalians are so tony, that way? Well, but Danny thinks an awful lot of that—if a thing is tony or not. Don't *you*, too? You look as if you did."

"The word isn't in my vocabulary, Lizzie. Let me have another look at the baby before I go, won't you?"

"He looks like Hiram—ain't?" said the mother fondly, as they stood beside the crib in her bedroom and gazed down upon the sleeping infant. "I hope he gives as smart a man as what his father is."

"But, Lizzie, don't you think the room is too close for him?" Margaret gasped, loosening the fur at her throat in the stifling atmosphere of the chamber.

"Yes," Lizzie whispered; "but Jennie and Sadie are so *old*-fashioned that way, they think it's awful to have fresh

air at a baby. When they go, I open up."

"But," asked Margaret, surprised, "why do you have to be old-fashioned because they are?"

"Hush—sh! They're coming upstairs to get their coats and hats. A person darsent go against them—especially Jennie. Haven't you found *that* out yet? I've been *wondering* how you were getting on with them. They'll want to boss you so."

"Oh, I was bossed for eight years by the uncle with whom I lived, so I've learned how to—I'm used to it," she judiciously returned.

"Do you think you can stick it out with them?" Lizzie whispered. "Don't you think mebbly one of these days they'll go *too* far and you'll answer them back? And I guess they often bragged to you, already, didn't they—how they never get over an *insult*?"

"I trust I shall never insult them."

"Well, I'm as peaceable as most," said Lizzie, "but I often felt glad, already, that we live a little piece away from Jennie and Sadie, though I know I oughtn't to say it."

"But I still don't see, Lizzie, why you keep this room air-tight because they don't like fresh air," said Margaret, puzzled. "Do you mean you'd rather damage your baby than have them quarrel with you?"

"Well, I open up as soon as they go. You see if they ever get mad at me, they'd cut our children out of their will."

"Their will? I thought Daniel supported them."

Lizzie stared incredulously.

"Danny supported them?" she repeated hoarsely. "Och, my souls! You thought that! As if he would!"

Lizzie looked so contemptuous of Margaret's intelligence that the latter realized that their opinion of each other's brilliancy was mutual.

"But," Margaret argued, "Daniel

would have to support them if they were penniless. They are too old to support themselves."

"They have their own good incomes this long time, already," stated Lizzie. "Do you mean to say," she asked wonderingly, "that you thought they *hadn't* anything and yet you didn't mind Daniel's keeping them at his house with you there?"

"Why should that make any difference to me—their having anything?"

"Say!" said Lizzie, her dull eyes wide open. "I always heard how in the South it gives easy-going people, but I never thought they would be *that* easy-going!"

"Suppose *your* husband wanted his sisters to live here," Margaret asked curiously, "you would not consent to it? You'd oppose Hiram, would you? I can't seem to see you doing that, Lizzie."

"But Hiram wouldn't want Jennie and Sadie to live here! He'd know better. He'd know that, peaceable as I am, I couldn't hold out with them. And, to be sure, Hiram and I would both feel awful bad to have them get down on us. Why, they've got, anyhow, a hundred thousand dollars apiece!"

"And wear near-seal coats," said Margaret thoughtfully, "and rhinestone rings! How queer!"

"Yes, ain't their coats grand? They paid fifty dollars apiece for them! Maybe Danny will get *you* one like them some time."

"God forbid! I'd get a divorce if he did! Come, Lizzie, don't you be a coward—let some air into this room. I'll stand by you and take your part," she said, holding up her muff as if it were a revolver and aiming toward the next room, in which they could hear the voices of Jennie and Sadie. "Advance at your peril!" she dramatically addressed the closed door between the two rooms.

Lizzie stared in dumb wonder and slowly shook her head.

"No, I darsent get Jennie mad at me. Wait till *you* have a baby, once, and you'll see how they'll want to tell you the way to raise it. You'll have to mind them if you want your children to inherit from them."

"Oh, Lizzie, it doesn't pay to sell one's soul for a mess of pottage!"

Scarcely had she spoken when she looked for Lizzie to respond, "You married Danny!" But this bright retort did not apparently occur to Lizzie, for she only stared at Margaret dumbly.

"Well," thought Margaret, "of course, a woman who considered Hiram a prize wouldn't think Daniel needed to be apologized for."

"Lizzie," she changed the subject abruptly, "have you ever seen your husband's stepmother?"

"Once or twice or so—yes."

"I've been in New Munich two months, and have not yet met her, though, you know, she lives only fifteen miles away."

"Yes, well, but we don't associate with her much. She's very plain and common, that way, and Jennie and Sadie are so proud and high-minded, you know. They're ashamed of their stepmother."

"And you, Lizzie—are you ashamed of her?"

"Oh, well, me, I'm not so proud, that way. But Hiram, he would not like for me to take up with her. He feels it so much that they have to leave her live, rent free, in their old home when she ain't their own mother. But Daniel and the girls won't put her to the poorhouse for fear it would make talk, and that wouldn't do, you see, Daniel being such a consistent church member and Hiram a minister."

"She used to come here to see us once in a while, and Hiram used to be ashamed to walk with her to the depot when she would go away, because she

is a Mennonite and dresses in the plain garb, and it *looks* so for a United Brethren minister to walk through the town with a Mennonite. People would have asked him, next time they saw him, who she was. So he used to make Naomi walk with her to the depot. Naomi didn't like it, either; she was afraid her girl friends might laugh at her grandmother. But her father always made her go. And then after a while grandmom, she stopped coming in to see us any more. You see"—Lizzie lowered her voice—"the Leitzels don't want folks to know about their stepmother."

"Because she is 'plain and common'?"

"Yes, and because it could make trouble. I don't rightly understand, but I think they're afraid some one might put her up to bringing a lawsuit about the property. But I tell Hiram he needn't be afraid of that. No one could make her do anything against any of them—she's too proud of them. And she's such a good-hearted old soul, she wouldn't hurt a cat."

Margaret was thoughtful as she drew on her gloves.

"About six months back," Lizzie continued, "she surprised us all by coming in again to see us. It was so long since she'd been to see us, we never looked for her. And, to be sure, we never encouraged her to come, either, Hiram feeling the way he does. Well, she come in to tell us she didn't feel able to do for herself any more out there alone on the old place. She supported herself raising vegetables in the back yard, and now, she said, she's too old any more to do it, and wouldn't we give her a home—or either Hiram or either Danny and the girls."

"Well, the girls and Danny wouldn't hear to it. Me, I said if she was strong enough to help me with the work a little, I could send off my hired girl and take her. But Hiram said she wouldn't be able to do the washing like our

hired girl did, and we couldn't keep her *and* the hired girl; and, anyhow, he couldn't have her living with us, her being a Mennonite. 'It stands to reason!' Hiram said. So she went back home again, and I haven't seen her since. I pity her, too, living alone out there, as old as what she is. I can't think *how* she makes out, either! What makes it seem so hard is that she was such a good, kind stepmother to them all while they were poor, and it was only her hard work that kept a roof over them for many years while their father drank and didn't do anything for them."

Margaret still made no comment, though she was looking very grave and thoughtful.

"Would it mebbly make you ashamed, too," asked Lizzie, "before your grand friends in New Munich, to have her round, she talking so Dutch and ignorant?"

"No." Margaret shook her head. "I'm not 'proud and high-minded,' like Jennie and Sadie."

"Well," admitted Lizzie confidentially, "I'm not either. I told Hiram once, 'You have no need to feel ashamed of her. Wasn't Christ's father nothing but a carpenter?' But Hiram answered me, 'Och, Lizzie, you're dumb! Joseph was no blood relation to Christ.' 'Well,' I said, 'neither is your stepmother your blood relation.'"

"I suppose," Margaret speculated, "if their stepmother had money to leave them, they wouldn't feel so 'high-minded' about her, would they?"

"Oh, no," Lizzie readily assented; "that would make all the difference. But, you see, she hasn't a thing but what she gets from vegetables she can raise."

"I do begin to see," nodded Margaret.

"Danny never told us," Lizzie ventured tentatively, curiosity evidently getting the better of delicacy, "what *you're* worth?"

"What I'm worth? He hasn't tried

me long enough to find out. But I hope I'll be worth as much to him as you are to Hiram—giving him children and making a home for him."

"But I mean," explained Lizzie, coloring a little at her own temerity, but with curiosity oozing from every pore of her, "what did you bring Danny? I guess Jennie and Sadie told you, already, that I brought Hiram thirty thousand. And I'll get more when my father is deceased."

"Are both your parents living?" asked Margaret, with what seemed to Lizzie persistent evasion.

"My mother died last summer," she returned, in a matter-of-fact, almost a cheerful, tone of voice. "Pop had her to Philadelphia, and she got sick for him, and he had to bring her right home. And in only half a day's time she was a corpse, already," said Lizzie brightly.

"As if she expected me to say, 'Hurrah! Good for mother!'" thought Margaret wonderingly.

"Did you inherit, too, from your parents?" persisted her inquisitor.

"All my virtues and all my vices, I believe," answered Margaret, turning away and walking to the door. "Shall we go down now?"

Lizzie took a step after her.

"Maybe you think I spoke too soon?" she asked anxiously.

"Spoke too soon?"



"Hiram would be so pleased if, after you go, I could tell him. He wonders so, did his brother Danny do as well as he did."

"Asking you what you're worth. To be sure, it ain't any of my business. But I thought I'd ask you, once. Hiram would be so pleased if, after you go, I could tell him. He wonders so, did his brother Danny do as well as he did. But I guess I spoke too soon."

She paused expectantly.

"Never mind," said Margaret dully, again turning away.

"Say," said Lizzie solicitously, "you look tired and a little pale. Would you feel for a cup of tea before you go?"

"No, thank you, Lizzie."

Just here the door opened softly, and

Jennie and Sadie came into the room and went to the crib of the slumbering baby.

"Yes, he looks good," nodded Jennie approvingly. "You have got the room nice and warm, Lizzie. Just you keep the air off of him and he'll never get sick for you. There's a doctor's wife lives near us, and you ought to see, Lizzie, the outlandish way she raises that baby! Why, any time you pass the house, you can see the baby coach out on the front porch standin', whether it's cold *or* warm! A doctor's wife, mind you, exposin' her young baby like that! Till they're anyhow eight months old, a'ready, they shouldn't be taken into the air, winter *or* summer. If you didn't keep little Danny in the house all the time, you'd soon see how he'd ketch cold for you!"

Lizzie looked at Margaret solemnly, with an expression that might have been interpreted as a wink.

"He certainly is a fine boy!" murmured Sadie fondly, looking upon the little pink-and-white baby with a vague yearning in her old face.

"Yes," said Jennie pensively, "babies are such nice little things. I often think it's such a pity there ain't a more genteel way of gettin' them."

Lizzie nudged Margaret behind Jennie's back.

"It's a pity they have to grow up to be men," said Margaret.

As they all went downstairs, Lizzie held Margaret back for an instant to whisper to her.

"I don't know what loosened up my tongue to-day to say the things to you I did! Hiram would be cross if he knew how free I told you things."

"About his stepmother, you mean?"

"No, I mean about Jennie and Sadie. You might go and *tell* them what I said."

"Yes, I might—if I were the villainess of a play and wanted to make them cut your children out of their will."

"You *won't* tell, will you?" Lizzie pleaded. "It ain't that I'd care so much—though, to be sure, I'd like to think the children would inherit all they could—but it's Hiram would be so displeased at me talking to you the way I did."

"Don't give yourself any anxiety, Lizzie. Of course I shan't tell."

Margaret reflected, on the way home, as, quiet and rather white, she leaned back in her seat in the train, pleading fatigue and a headache to escape conversation, that this day, somehow, marked an epoch in her understanding of the Leitzel family. She had suddenly, after two months of incredible obtuseness, recognized that they measured everything in life—duty, friendship, religion, love—by just one thing.

"Yet Daniel married a dowerless wife!" she marveled.

The wild suspicion crossed her mind that Walter might have misled Daniel into thinking her an heiress, even as he had let her assume that her lover was well born.

But she was instantly ashamed of herself for even conceiving of such treachery on Walter's part.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sadie Leitzel looked as if she were about to collapse with the pressure of all that she had to communicate to Jennie when, next morning, she returned alone, at noon, from a shopping excursion upon which she had started out just after breakfast with Margaret. Dropping her bundles upon the center table in the sitting room, where Jennie sat in the bay window darning Daniel's socks, she dropped herself upon the sofa with a long breath of mingled excitement and exhaustion.

"Well, did she get her dress? And where is she at?" Jennie inquired.

"No, she didn't get her dress," breathed Sadie, taking off, one after another, her veil, gloves, hat, furs, over-

shoes, and coat. "I guess she didn't have an *intention* of gettin' a dress when she started out with me. I had the hardest time to get her to even look at their things at Fahnestock's. She seems to think, Jennie, that New Munich hasn't anythin' good enough for her to wear!"

"Did she say that?" demanded Jennie.

"Well, when she had only just gave a careless glance at some of their *ready-made* evenin' dresses, she shook her head and said to me, 'There's nothin' here. I'll have to wait until I go to Philadelphia some time.' And when I wanted her, then, to get goods and take it to Miss Snyder, she said Fahnestock's had such a cheap, poor quality of goods, not worth makin' up!"

"Well," pronounced Jennie, "I guess if our New Munich stores are good enough for you and me, they're plenty good enough for as plain a dresser as what she is! Our clothes are a lot dressier than hers! The idea!"

"Yes, the very idea!"

"And after Danny's tellin' her he *wanted* her to have a new dress! And me tellin' her that her dresses that she's got give us all a shamed face!"

"All she got new for herself," said Sadie, "was another pair of these long white kid gloves at four-fifty a pair. I told her silk ones would do just as good, and them you can wash. But she didn't listen to me. She just took my hand and held it out to the saleslady and told her to measure it, and," added Sadie, a veiled pleasure coming into her eyes, "she got *me* a pair of long white kid gloves, too, and paid for them out of that twenty-dollar check Danny gave her!"

"Oh!" cried Jennie, shocked. "When Danny gave it to her for a dress, yet! What'll he say, anyhow?"

"She knows he's so crazy about her, she don't seem afraid to do anythin'," said Sadie.

"He'll soon stop givin' her money if she spends it on other ones instead of for what he tells her to buy."

"Yes, I guess! But me—I never had any long white kid gloves before, Jennie." Sadie could not repress her beaming pleasure. "They'll feel grand, I guess."

"Four-fifty is too much to put into a pair of gloves. Your white silk ones would do plenty good enough."

"But she got you a pair, too, Jennie! Here they are," added Sadie, fumbling among her packages on the table. "She asked me your size and got you a pair, too."

"I won't wear them. I'll get the money back and give it to Danny!" declared Jennie, who, according to her lights, was as scrupulous as she was "close." "It ain't right to Danny for her to squander his money like that. My gracious! Thirteen-fifty for just gloves! You ought to take yours back, too, Sadie."

"But the saleslady tried one of mine on and stretched them," returned Sadie, not very regretfully. "And mind, Jennie"—she hastily diverted her sister from her suggestion—"mind what she did with the rest part of the twenty dollars!"

"What?" demanded Jennie.

"She spent every cent of it buyin' presents for her sister's children in Charleston! When I told her Danny wouldn't like it at all for her to do that, she said, 'Oh, but Daniel loves my little nephew and nieces. He'll be glad to have me send them somethin' from us both.' And she puts in the package a card: 'From Daniel and Margaret for the three dearest babies in the world.'"

"My souls!" Jennie exclaimed. "What'll Danny say, yet? Her usin' up all that twenty dollars and nothin' to show for it!"

"Except three pairs of white kid gloves." Sadie shook her head pensively, but still with a covert gleam of

pleasure in her own share of the rake-off.

"Well," said Jennie, with emphasis, "I'll certainly give her a piece of my mind! Where is she at?"

"She said, as it was twelve o'clock, she'd go to Danny's office and walk home with him for dinner. And what do you think she gave me as her reason for doin' that?"

"Well? What?"

"She said she wanted a chance to see that Hamilton girl again, that works for our Danny. Did you ever? When we all *told* her, a'ready, she can't associate with Danny's clerk!"

"Well, Sadie," said Jennie grimly, "Margaret's easy-goin', and she thinks we're the same. She'll have to learn her mistake, that's all. She ain't goin' to run with the Hamilton girl, and that's all there is to it!"

"Och, Jennie, if you'd been along this mornin', you'd have wondered *at* her the way she acts—speakin' so awful friendly and pleasant to the girls that waited on us in the store, and even sayin', 'Thank you, my dear,' to a little cash girl! Yes, makin' herself that familiar! And then when Mrs. Congressman Ocksreider come along through the store and I poked Margaret that she should stop and speak to her, Margaret just nodded and walked right a-past her, though you could see that Mrs. Ocksreider was goin' to stop and talk to us! And, Jennie, I wanted the store girls to *see* us conversin' with Mrs. Ocksreider.

"I would have stopped and talked with her myself, *whether* or no, but she looked mad and sailed right a-past me, the way Margaret had sailed a-past *her*. And I heard two girls at the button counter titterin' and sayin', 'Did you ever get left?' I was so cross at Margaret, I told her:

"'You hardly spoke to her, and she's Mrs. Congressman Ocksreider, and worth a half a million dollars!'

"And Margaret" answered me, 'I didn't think she was worth two cents any time I've talked with her. But if she's a member of Congress! Why, Sadie, you are deceivin' me! Pennsylvania is not yet a suffrage State!'

"And I told her I didn't say it was and certainly hoped it never would be. 'But,' I said, 'that's neither here nor there, whether Pennsylvania's a suffrage State! What I wish is that if you have to cut any one, let it be cash girls and not our most high-toned lady friends,' I said."

"And *what*," asked Jennie, "did she answer to *that*?"

"She said, 'Oh, Sadie, I feel quite too humble to want to 'cut' *any* one—even pretentious people like your congressman's ordinary little wife!'

"'Well,' I said, '*you're* got no need to feel humble, now that you're married to our *Danny*!'

"But, Jennie," said Sadie, looking bewildered, "think of callin' Mrs. Ocksreider 'ordinary little wife!'

"Well, I think! It was enough to give you the headache, Sadie, such a mornin' as you've had!"

"But *do* you think, mebbey," Sadie asked, a little awe-struck, "that governors are higher than congressmen—Margaret thinkin' herself better than Mrs. Ocksreider, yet?"

"It would look that way," said Jennie, also impressed.

"Here she and Danny come," Jennie announced, at the sound of the opening of the front door. "They're *laughin'*. So I guess he don't know yet about that twenty dollars!"

"And I guess she listened to me, after all," added Sadie, "about goin' in there to his office and actin' familiar with Miss Hamilton—or else Danny wouldn't be *laughin'* with her."

Had they known what had really taken place in Daniel's office while they had been sitting discussing Margaret—who, to tell the truth, was far more of

an enigma to them than they were to her—they would have considered Daniel's laughter just now, as he entered the house with her, to be nothing short of lunacy.

A half hour earlier, Daniel, on returning to his private office from a tour of inspection through his other offices, had heard, to his surprise, from the adjoining room where his secretary was supposed to be working, her voice in earnest conversation with some one. The door between his room and hers was ajar, and he could distinctly hear what she was saying, and the character of it was so far removed from any phase of the legal business of his office that Daniel was dumfounded. It was sacrilege to introduce here anything that did not pertain strictly to the work of the firm.

"The religious introspection," Miss Hamilton was saying, "so widely engendered by Emerson's writings in men and women of a high type has come to seem to us, in these days, rather morbid. We think it as unwholesome, now, to think too much about our spiritual, as about our physical, health. Then, too, the struggle for existence being sharper, people have less time to sit down and investigate their souls. They've got to keep going or be left behind in the race."

"In their effort to win in the race, however—what they call winning—they're very likely to lose their own souls. And 'what profiteth it a man'?" spoke another voice in reply—a voice that brought a quick flush to Daniel's face; a flush of strangely mingled emotions—of anger that she was here with his secretary, and of the joy with which the sound of her voice, the mere rustle of her skirts, never failed to thrill him.

"The art of Mrs. Humphry Ward"—Miss Hamilton was again speaking; he had missed the connecting link through the shock of discovering Margaret's presence—"has been a steady

upward growth and development. Every novel produced by her is more artistic than its predecessor. But though her art is now at its climax, she is no longer read as she used to be, because her point of view is one that the world has passed by. The women of her books are the ideal feminine creations of fifty years ago, and they don't interest us any longer. Most of us have not yet grown up to Bernard Shaw's point of view, yet we are nearer to him than to Mrs. Ward. To my mind, the whole feminist problem is an economic one. No man or woman can be spiritually free who is economically dependent, Emerson and Marcus Aurelius and the Christian Scientists to the contrary notwithstanding. Even the vote isn't going to help women until they make up their minds to 'get off of men's backs,' as Charlotte Perkins Gilman says."

"How about married women who are bearing children?" asked Margaret. "They've got to be financially dependent on some one."

"Since the State does not support women who are giving citizens to it and who are thereby disabled from self-support, they should have a legal right to a fair proportion of their husbands' incomes."

"But in America men don't need to be coerced by laws to treat women generously," suggested Margaret.

"That's your Southern idea. A self-respecting human being doesn't want generosity; she doesn't want to stretch out her hand and ask for what she needs. It's humiliating, degrading! Fancy a grown woman asking a man, 'May I buy a hat to-day?' I'd rather take in stairs to scrub!"

"Well," Margaret returned, "I shall educate *all* my daughters to professions, because, quite apart from the economic side of it, women become such driveling fools when they live in aimless idleness, when they have no definite interest in

life. And they are so discontented and restless. An occupation, an interest, surely makes for happiness and for a higher personal development."

"I believe," said Miss Hamilton, "that a mother wrongs a daughter, just as much as she would wrong a son, when she fails to educate her for a self-supporting occupation. Look at these women of New Munich who live only to kill time—how they lack the personal dignity, the character, that a life of service, of *producing*, gives to either man or woman! Of course, mere work doesn't ennoble—beasts of burden can work. It's work that vitally interests us—as you say—and that we love for its own sake, that is the joy and health of any soul."

"Do you love being Mr. Leitzel's secretary like that?"

"Of course not! Being Mr. Leitzel's secretary is two-thirds drudgery and only one-third humanly interesting. I'm threatening to take to the platform to expound the truth that women who have to support themselves are invariably overworked, while women who live on men haven't enough to do to keep them wholesome. Middle-aged married women, for instance, whose children are grown up, go almost insane for want of an interest in life. No wonder human creatures so situated grow fretful and petty and small-souled!"

"Perhaps the window-smashing suffragette is only reacting from a too long want of occupation," suggested Margaret. "The emptiness of her life makes her hysterical, and she shrieks with rage and throws things. But, my dear, why do you, clever as you are, remain in a position that is two-thirds drudgery? Drudgery is for dull people, who, of course, prefer it to work that would tax them to think."

"It's a stepping-stone for me to the bigger work I shall some day do, Mrs. Leitzel."

"What is that?"

"Something splendid!" Miss Hamilton responded, in a voice of quite girlish delight. "Something in which you shall have a share, if you will—a very big share! I'll tell you all about it one of these days. We haven't time now. It's lunch time, and I have only a half hour."

"When can we get together again?" Margaret asked eagerly. "I'm just living for these times with you."

"And you must know," responded Miss Hamilton, with feeling, "what they mean to me—starved as I've been for companionship in a place like New Munich. Well, I'm free every evening. And we could take walks any afternoon between five and seven."

"Then as soon as people have finished giving parties in my honor, I shall be free to be with you as much as you'll let me be, Miss Hamilton. I shan't have to go to parties that are not given specially for me."

"Of course not. You couldn't keep it up. For a woman like you it would be too deadly."

This, to Daniel, was a new and upsetting point of view. He was so sure that all women in Miss Hamilton's position were envious of the social rioting of women placed as his wife was. And here was Margaret planning to discard "society" for evenings and rambles with his stenographer! As if Miss Hamilton were not uppish enough already from her constant offers of higher salaries! Why, even as it was, he could hardly put up with her air of independence, and if he permitted his wife to take her up as an intimate friend! Well, of course, he would have to put a stop to the thing emphatically. He thought he had expressed himself definitely enough to Margaret last Saturday while they were automobiling, but evidently he had not.

"I'll make myself unmistakably clear this time," he resolved. "I'll let Mar-



"She seems to think, Jennie, that New Munich hasn't anythin' good enough for her to wear!"

garet know that I am not accustomed to having my wishes set aside as of no importance."

CHAPTER XV.

Ten minutes later he and Margaret sat facing each other on either side of his flat-topped office desk.

Miss Hamilton's conscience-clear self-possession as she had passed through his office to go to her luncheon, and his wife's equally guiltless aspect as she had greeted him with cheerful affection, had been a little disarming, it is true, to his determined purpose.

But Daniel was not readily diverted from a line he had decided upon, and Margaret's easy indifference to his expressed wish as to Miss Hamilton had aroused his obstinacy. And Daniel's obstinacy was a snag to be reckoned with.

So, seated opposite her at his desk, he expounded to her very forcibly his reasons for prohibiting any social relations whatever with any one of his office staff.

"And now," he concluded his harangue, "I lay my command upon you, my dear."

"Oh, but, my dear!" laughed Margaret. "That's rather absurd, you know! Now listen, Daniel. If you warned me against Miss Hamilton as a person who was immoral or illiterate or ill bred, I should, of course, see the reasonableness of your objection to her. But when she is really superior in every respect to every one of the people you do want me to be intimate with—better born, better bred, more intelligent—when my intimacy with her is going to mean to me more than I have words to express—a close friendship with a congenial and stimulating mind and character—you can't expect me to give it up for such reasons as you offer me, Daniel—chief among them being that she works for her living. In the South, we are so used, since the war, to seeing gentlewomen work for their living, and we are so unused to meeting socially people like the Ocksreiders and the Millers, who tell me—one of them did—that her house is 'het by steam' and who say, 'Outen the light'— Well, dear, you see," she concluded, rising, "it's ridiculous to discuss it. Let's go home to luncheon."

"Sit down, Margaret."

"But I'm famishing, Daniel—I'm weak with hunger. You'll have to take me home in a taxicab if you don't take me soon."

"Sit down. You've got to promise to obey me in this matter, Margaret."

"Oh!" Her voice rippled with laughter. "This is the twentieth century A. D.; not B. C., Daniel. You're mixed in your dates. And you seem to forget you married me; you didn't adopt me."

"You must drop at once any further relations with my secretary."

"But, my dear," she exclaimed, in surprise, "haven't I yet made it clear to you that I don't intend to?"

"I am accustomed to being obeyed, Margaret!"

"By whom? Your wives?"

"Come, come, I want your promise."

"Daniel," she pleaded with him, "please don't be so tiresome! I am sure that you, clever lawyer that you are, must recognize that my position is quite impregnable and yours weak and indefensible. Asking me to be friends with people who 'outen the light' and to cut one with whom I can have such improving conversations as that to which you ignominiously listened just now! Why didn't you honorably close your door? Could you *understand* our deep remarks, Daniel?"

"I'm waiting for your promise, Margaret."

Again Margaret rose.

"I'm hungry, and I'm going home."

"Margaret," said Daniel incredulously, "surely you are not deliberately refusing what I ask of you?"

"As surely as I'd refuse to walk a tight rope at your behest, my lord."

"You defy me?" he asked quietly, his lips white.

It was her turn, now, to look incredulous.

"But, Daniel, how can you take it to heart like this? How can you suppose yourself better qualified than I am to choose my friends? Next thing"—she laughed—"you'll be telling me what books I may not read!"

"Do you intend to obey me?"

"I hope I know my wifely duty too well to spoil you, my dear."

"You will obey me, Margaret, or —" He paused helplessly.

"Obey me," she mocked him, "or die, woman!" She suddenly bent and kissed his forehead. "Do come home!"

"When I've had your promise."

"Daniel! A woman in these days who obeys her husband ought to be ostracized—or arrested and confined in an institution for dangerous lunatics!"

Daniel looked at her meditatively.

"I'm certainly up against it," he was saying to himself. "I could be firm against tears or temper; but when she

just jokes about it and laughs at me and goes on doing as she pleases, what can I do with her?"

"Margaret," he said, "I've never quarreled with any one in my life, but," with a little icy gleam in his eyes that did chill her for the moment, "I've *always had my own way!*"

"Which has, of course, been dreadfully bad for you. It's well you've married a wife who is going to be *very firm* with you!"

Daniel bit his lip to keep from laughing. Not for an instant did he think of yielding. The difficulty of the situation served only to aggravate his obstinacy. There was more than one way of getting a thing, and Daniel was not at all above resorting to cunning. Half the successes of his career had been the result of his cunning. He did not call it that—he named it subtlety, farsightedness.

"I want to ask you something, Margaret. Sit down."

She sighed and dropped again into the chair opposite him.

"You bought your new dress—frock—gown—this morning?"

She shook her head, too weary and hungry to speak.

"You didn't?"

"I told you I didn't intend to get anything."

"But we all told you to! I wish you to!"

"Can't get anything in New Munich. Don't suppose you'd want me to go to Philadelphia or Lancaster just now, for a gown? With the expense of the party on your hands?"

"That would be an unnecessary extravagance."

"I shall buy no clothes in this village while I have what I have."

"And that twenty dollars I gave you?"

"What about it?"

"I gave it to you for a gown."

"I know you did. But I told you last Saturday I didn't want one."

"Did you cash the check?"

"Yes."

"Where is the money?"

"Spent."

"What? Spent for *what?*"

"Oh, Daniel, you busybody! Well, it was spent for kid gloves and presents for Hattie's babies from you and me. We needed the gloves; I didn't need a gown; you seemed anxious to have me squander twenty dollars; so I sent six dollars' worth of things to the babies in Charleston."

"Without consulting me!"

"But there was nothing to consult about. And you seemed so determined to have me spend twenty dollars."

"For a frock."

Margaret flopped her head wearily on her hand and did not answer.

"You say 'we' needed the gloves—did you buy *me* some? I don't need any."

"I bought some for Jennie and Sadie," she answered mechanically.

Daniel's face turned red.

"What did you spend on *them*?"

"I don't know—twice four-fifty—*You* multiply it."

"Nine dollars for gloves for them! Good heavens! But, Margaret, they have their *own* money."

"That's nice of them—I mean for them. Ah, Daniel, won't you *come* home?"

"The time has come, Margaret, when you and I must come to an understanding about your—your income."

"Won't it do after dinner?"

"It's a matter for private discussion, and we're here alone now. Let's settle it. In the first place," impressively, "it is time that I took over the management of your finances. Does Walter have them in charge?"

"Daniel," said Margaret gravely, a faint color coming to her cheeks, "Wal-

ter surely did not give you to understand that I had any money?"

"No. You did."

"I? How?"

"You said you were one of your uncle's heirs."

"Only to the old homestead, Berkeley Hill. Nothing else."

They looked at each other across the table, Daniel's small, keen eyes meeting steadily her faintly troubled ones.

"Did you think I had money, Daniel?"

"What is the homestead supposed to be worth, and how many heirs are there?"

"Hattie and I own it. I don't know what it is worth. It's awfully out of repair, you know."

"But Walter pays you rent, of course, for your share of it?"

"Oh, no, he couldn't afford to!"

"Couldn't afford to! When they live like millionaires! Oriental rugs, a butler to wait on the table, solid silver and expensive china—anyway, it *looked* expensive—and they can't afford to pay you rent?"

"All those things were inherited, Daniel, along with the place—the butler included."

"Then you own those rugs and that silver and china?"

"Jointly with my sister, yes."

"But that's property, Margaret. How, then, are you receiving your share?"

"I'm not receiving it."

"Why not? I hate that slipshod Southern way of doing business! You ought, of course, to be drawing an income from your half of that place."

"But it yields no income."

"Isn't any of the land cultivated?"

"The land consists of two square miles of woodland about the house. Walter says the place, as it is, couldn't even be rented; and none of us have any money to spend in fixing it up. So

there you are. It's a home for Hattie's family, that's all."

"Gracious!"

"Is it a shock to you to find me penniless?" asked Margaret gravely. "Wouldn't you have married me if you had known?"

She was acutely conscious of the fact that, since she had married him for a home, she certainly could not judge him very critically if he had married her for a supposed fortune.

Daniel looked at her speculatively. Would he have married her if he had known? Well, he was pretty certain that he would have; that at that time, incredible as it might seem, her charm for him outmeasured any dower a wife might have brought him. But now? Did he rue his "blind and headlong"—so he considered it—yielding to her fascination?

His eye swept over her appraisingly—over her dark hair, her soft dark eyes, the curve of her red lips, her broad, boyish shoulders, her fine hands clasped on the top of the desk—and he knew that he adored her. Not even in the face of the shock he felt at learning of her pennilessness, and on the head of her audacious defiance of his wishes, could he regret for an instant that she was his—his very own. And it suddenly came to him, with a force that sent the blood to his face, that her being comparatively penniless—for, of course, he'd insist on getting *something* out of that Berkeley Hill estate—her absolute dependence upon him, made her all the more his own, his property, subject to his will. If she were penniless, he held her in his power. It was with the primitive instinct of a savage that he gloated over his possession, the most precious of all his possessions.

"I shall teach her this much about the value of money—of which she seems as ignorant as a child—that the price of her board and clothing is obedience to me.

"Yes, Margaret," he at length replied; "I would have married you even if I had known you were penniless. I married you because I loved you."

She did not tell him that there he had the advantage of her. She envied him his clear conscience in the matter. A shade of respect for him came into her countenance as she looked at him; a respect she could not feel for herself on the same score.

He took a small blank book from his desk and a crisp ten-dollar bill from his purse and laid them before her.

"This is the first of the month. I shall give you ten dollars a month for pocket money, and you will keep an account of your expenditures in this book and show it to me at the first of each month. Anything you need to buy that this allowance won't cover you can ask me about. You seem to know nothing of the value of money, and it's time you learned. I can't trust you with more than a small sum, since you at once go off and squander it on other people instead of spending it for yourself—or for what you were told to spend it for. No more of that, my dear! Your allowance is for your own needs. When you want to make gifts, consult me."

She dropped the money into her bag, but she did not pick up the blank book. Daniel took it up and held it out to her. She hesitated; but, dreading further discussion with him if she informed him that she had no intention of accounting to him, like a schoolgirl, for her use of ten dollars a month, she tucked the book also into her bag.

"You must sign over to me the power of attorney to collect rent from your brother-in-law for your half of that estate. I shall look into the matter, and if I feel that the property justifies it, I'll expend some money on it, and then we can rent it at a high rate; too high, probably, for Walter's means. He'll have to move out and live elsewhere."

Again she did not contradict him, while she privately determined to write to Walter herself that very day and warn him that she was not a party to any suggestions that Daniel might make as to Berkeley Hill.

And Daniel was privately telling himself that it would not be any time at all before he would contrive to get over into his own hands that entire estate.

"Also," he said to her, "I shall claim for you one-half of all the contents of the house—the books, pictures, china, silver, furniture——"

"Butler," inserted Margaret.

"Well, we'll leave them the butler," grinned Daniel. "He appeared to be more out of repair than anything else on the place."

The bare suggestion of bringing their family heirlooms into such a setting as that of Daniel's New Munich house seemed to Margaret like horrible sacrilege.

"I'd like to see anybody make Harriet strip Berkeley Hill of half its belongings!" she smiled.

"But if half its belongings are *yours*?"

"Uncle Osmond never meant them to be taken from the old home."

"His will doesn't say so, does it?"

"Of course not. He gave us credit for a few decent feelings."

Daniel regarded her in perplexity. How was it that she could weakly let herself be so absurdly imposed upon by her sister and brother-in-law as to her own property, all she had in the world, and yet, when it came to a matter like this of his secretary, be so hard to manage by a man of *his* resolution?

"He gave you credit, too, it seems, for having no business sense. Well, fortunately for you, you've got *me* to take care of that end for you now. I'll make that estate *yield* something—to your sister's advantage as well as yours. And now," he concluded, rising, slipping into his overcoat, and picking up



The door between his room and hers was ajar, and he could distinctly hear what she was saying.

his hat, "just one more word. Understand, my dear, that when you act like a naughty, disobedient, small girl"—he punctuated his words by tapping her shoulder with his derby—"you will be treated like one and have your allowance cut off. Eh? So I trust we'll hear no more of this nonsense about my secretary."

"I trust so, too."

"Good!"

"But," added Margaret, as they went forth together to the street, "I don't just see how you're going to get out of supporting your legal wife—so long as I consent to *let* you support me."

"You consent to *let* me? Now what do you mean by that nonsense? Some

of that feminist talk, is it, that Miss Hamilton was trying to stuff you with?"

"Never mind," said Margaret. "I won't explain what I mean, for, if I do, you'll begin to argue with me. And I refuse to argue any more about anything until I have had a good, square meal."

And so it was that, in spite of the revelations of the past hour in Daniel's office, Jennie and Sadie had the surprise of hearing them come into the house together laughing and talking as if nothing whatever had occurred to call for their brother's solemn displeasure with his heedless and irresponsible wife.

CHAPTER XVI.

Margaret did not, of course, think for an instant of giving up her friendship with Catherine Hamilton; but when she suggested that the Hamilton family and a few other people whom she liked, but whose names were not on the invitation list, be invited to their big reception, she met with an opposition to which she was obliged to yield.

"To invite such folks as those Hamiltons, that don't even own their own home, *little* as it is—well, it would just lower the tone of the party, that's all!" Jennie pronounced.

"But I'll be responsible for keeping up the tone of the party," Margaret gayly volunteered.

She quickly recognized, however, that in a matter like this, coöperation or compromise between the Leitzels and her was impossible, and that she must stand aside and let them give their party in their own way. She carried her self-obliteration even so far as to refrain from suggesting, on the auspicious day of the party, the removal from the dining-room sideboard of the life-sized, navy-blue glass owl which was a water pitcher, and the two orange-colored

glass dishes that stood on easels on either side of the owl.

She did spend rather a troubled half hour in wondering how, since the invitations were, of course, in her name and Daniel's, Catherine Hamilton would regard the fact that she was not invited. But the absurdity of the Leitzels' delusion that they could withhold or bestow social recognition upon her friend must be so manifest to Catherine that surely she could not take it seriously. It seemed to Margaret that to let this trifling, vulgar episode cast even a shadow upon the ideal friendship into which she and Catherine were growing was to belittle and dishonor it.

"I can't offer her any explanation. I can only trust to her large-minded understanding of my situation."

But she had an uncomfortable consciousness that it was a situation that Catherine herself would not have tolerated.

"Even Hiram's Lizzie considers it unbearable," she reflected. "Why, I can't offer any least hospitality to any one unless my sisters-in-law approve! I can't ask Catherine Hamilton to dine or lunch with me! Which means, of course, that I can't accept *her* hospitality. It's rather grotesque."

Yet, when she considered how devotedly Daniel's sisters served him, how minutely they attended to every little detail of his comfort—in a way that most men, she was sure, would have found harassing, but that seemed essential to Daniel's well-being—she knew that he would never be able, without great misery, to live apart from them, and that he certainly would not entertain the idea for a moment.

"And as for them, their occupation, their purpose in life, would be taken from them if they didn't have Daniel to fuss over."

Two days before the date of the reception, the evening papers gave New Munich a lurid description, furnished

by Jennie and Daniel, of every detail of it, the Philadelphia caterer and the Lancaster florist being advertised in headlines that made Margaret's flesh creep. She had a vision of the consternation of her Charleston relatives should they ever see that paper, and she was thankful that the distance that separated her from them precluded the possibility of their learning of her association with such blatant vulgarity, unless—awful thought!—Daniel should be visited with the idea of mailing them a marked copy!

When, the next afternoon, Margaret was out for a country walk with Catherine Hamilton after office hours, she decided that it would be better to refer casually to the prospective party, rather than obviously to avoid mentioning it.

"Fancy me to-morrow night, Catherine, lined up with Mr. Leitzel and his sisters for two or three hours, shaking hands with over one hundred people and making to each precisely the same inspired remarks: 'Mrs. Blank, how do you do? I'm glad to see you. I'm so glad you got here!' If I could only vary it a bit! But no, I shall have to say those selfsame words exactly one hundred and seven times. Isn't it deplorable?"

A faint tremor in her voice as she asked the question caused her friend to turn and look into her face—and something in the strained expression of the beautiful eyes that Catherine Hamilton was growing to love moved this rather austere young woman to a sudden pity. For Catherine, though a girl of keen wit and of a strong, independent spirit, was full of feeling; a combination of qualities that gave her a charm for those of her own sex that she did not have for men.

Obedying an impulse of her heart, she suddenly stopped in the woodsy path where they walked, put her arms around Margaret, and clasped her close. And Margaret, at the unexpected touch of

understanding love—almost the first she had ever known in her life—held herself rigid in her friend's embrace that she might not burst into passionate tears, clenching her teeth to choke down her pent-up emotion.

She released herself quickly, and for an instant turned away. When she again spoke, her voice was even and natural. She had not let herself shed one betraying tear.

"You promised to tell me, Catherine, about that career of yours, you know—to which your present work is a stepping-stone—and what *my* part is to be in it."

Catherine, eager to launch forth upon her hobby to her new friend, glowed with enthusiasm as she talked.

"I have come from a race, Margaret, that for generations have been teachers—college professors, ministers, public-school superintendents. The pedagogue seems to be born in every one of us. And it's in me strong. So I'm going to devote my life to the establishing of a school for girls in which all the training shall converge to one ideal—that of service—as over against that of the usual finishing school—whatever that ideal is!

"And, Margaret, here's my point—I'm going to make my school fashionable, a formidable rival of those futile, idiotic institutions in which girls from the country are taught how they must enter a drawing-room or step into an automobile—and are quite incidentally instructed, cautiously and delicately, in every branch in the whole category of learning, so that they may be able to 'converse' on any subject whatever without betraying the awful depths of their ignorance, the vast expanse of their shallowness.

"My school shall teach girls that life is meant for earnest work, because work means physical and spiritual health and happiness. My school shall make girls ashamed to admit they've ever been to

the other sort of 'finishing' school. It's going to put that sort of school out of business, Margaret! I tell you, the coming woman is going to be the efficient woman. The unqualified of our sex will take a back seat—just as unqualified men do."

"I'm, of course, entirely in sympathy with your idea, Catherine, but I hope your service education includes home-making and motherhood. Leave us a few of the old-fashioned women, won't you?"

"My dear, don't worry about homes and husbands and babies. It is the futile fashionable woman, not the disciplined, thoughtful, college-bred woman, that refuses to have children. I've never known an earnest woman that didn't love children and yearn for motherhood. The trouble is, men are afraid of the earnest kind. They marry the frivolous, parasitical women, who live upon them, sapping their vitality, and give nothing in return. Yet you'll find men opposing college education for women, not realizing that a woman who has stood the discipline of a college course has developed a force of character that does not shrink for a moment from the further discipline and burden of motherhood, but welcomes it as her privilege and blessing.

"You know," Catherine continued, "in the days when home-making was necessarily an absorbing occupation it lent to women a dignity of character quite wanting in our present-day large class of feminine parasites—a class that has grown out of the new and easier domestic conditions and the too great concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. That's the explanation of woman's latter-day restlessness—she's fighting against the deterioration that comes with idleness and too easy conditions of life. She's fighting for her very life! *That's* what the feminist movement means."

"And my part in your fine scheme?"

asked Margaret, her face glowing with responsive enthusiasm.

"As a rich and influential woman, you will countenance and patronize my school. Perhaps send me your daughters—be a stockholder in it. You can even be fitting yourself, meantime, if you like, to be a teacher in it."

"But, Catherine—rich and influential? I? I am neither!"

Catherine looked at her curiously.

"What do you call rich, Margaret?"

"Oh, I don't know. I've never handled money in my life. I've always had everything I actually required right at my hand. I'm afraid I'm absurdly ignorant about money. I never had any of my own."

As Margaret spoke, she glanced up to meet in Catherine's eyes a puzzled, questioning expression that she failed to interpret.

"But surely you know that Mr. Leitzel is very rich?" said Catherine.

"It's such a relative term. My sister's family think themselves awfully poor, but they live more comfortably and spend money more freely than the Leitzels do. Of course, I understand that you Northerners are all more frugal than Southerners are," she ended vaguely.

Catherine laughed oddly.

"You *are* an innocent!"

"I'm beginning to realize that I am," nodded Margaret, feeling a something behind Catherine's tone and countenance that she did not quite get. "I might have been reared in a convent for all I've seen of life, Catherine."

"Yet you've not lacked the essentials," returned Catherine, with evident relief at turning the talk from the subject of money.

"The essentials to what?"

"To making you a truly fine and charming woman. You've lived in an environment of culture, of big ideas; and you've had no sordid money cares

to embitter you or blunt the sensitive fineness of your spirit."

"But my life has lacked one great essential, Catherine—affection, love."

"Your uncle must have loved you, dear, he *must* have. For you are lovable, you know. Well, rather!"

"He loved me as his handmaid who kept him comfortable. If ever I tried to be affectionate with him, he would act like a hyena!"

"If he was human, he loved you."

"He wasn't human, that was it. He had all run to intellect, and hadn't a vulnerable spot left."

"Did you love him?"

"I wanted to, but he wouldn't have it. When he died, I did miss him keenly. He had grown to be a habit with me—a stimulant, too. No one could live with Uncle Osmond and not keep very much alive. So, of course, my life seemed suddenly very empty without him. He had been my chief care and thought for so many years. I suppose I shall never quite get over missing him. But I can't say I ever really grieved for him."

When, a half hour later, at the end of an exhilarating and satisfying time together which put a new seal upon their friendship, the two young women parted to go to their homes, Catherine, walking slowly to give herself time to think, considered how strange it was that she, as Mr. Daniel Leitzel's confidential secretary, knew so very much more about him and his affairs than did his own wife.

"She actually does not know that she has married a multimillionaire. And I don't believe it would impress her greatly to discover that she had. She is unique! For a woman like Margaret to find herself tied up with those Leitzels!" Catherine laughed to herself at what seemed to her the extreme absurdity of the combination. "But it is so tragic, too! Why on earth did she marry him if not for his money? Will

she, I wonder, ever reach the point of telling me why she did? No"—she shook her head conclusively—"not so long as she continues to live with him will any one ever hear one disloyal syllable from her, I'm sure. If she ever came to the point of rectifying by divorce the blunder she made in marrying him—for whatever mysterious reason—then perhaps she'll explain herself to me."

Catherine wondered how long it would take Margaret to find out that she was married to one of the richest men in the State.

"If I ever see her inconvenienced by lack of funds, I'll enlighten her with some facts and figures known only to her husband and me," she resolved. "Even I don't know *all* he has, though I do know what the public doesn't dream of."

She was aware that her employer had, before ever trusting her with any knowledge of his financial affairs, tested and proved her to be a very safe repository of his secrets.

"But his wife, supposed to be one with himself and endowed with all his worldly goods, has a right to know the extent of them. If I don't supply her with any actual facts—which would, of course, roll from her like drops of mercury, leaving no least impression—I can, without treachery to Mr. Leitzel, give her to understand that her husband doesn't spend, in the course of a year, more than one-thirtieth of the interest on his capital."

She doubted, however, whether even a succinct statement like that would make any difference to Margaret unless she became a mother; for Catherine believed she had succeeded, though with some difficulty, in impressing upon her friend her own theory that the divine right of motherhood ought to make a woman, by law, a full and equal partner in all her husband's worldly goods.

"I certainly did have a time persuad-

ing her that my theory is of any importance in our modern social economy. Wait until the poor child learns the Pennsylvania-Dutch idea of woman's economic position—and until she begins to get a *little* acquainted with the man she has married!"

She drew a long breath as she reached the front door of her rented home.

"Well," she concluded, "my intimacy with my employer's wife promises some excitement!"

CHAPTER XVII.

In spite of the forbearance Margaret felt she had exercised in her desire to be scrupulously considerate of Daniel and his sisters in everything pertaining to the party, the night of this much-advertised social event found her in serious disfavor, not only with her sisters-in-law, but with her husband himself, for several reasons. First, her persistence in ignoring their opinions as to the sort of gown she should wear; secondly, their discovery that she was taking daily walks with Miss Hamilton, for though Margaret would not stoop to any secrecy as to her relation with Daniel's secretary, yet she had not gone out of her way to publish it, and so the walks had been going on for some time before her three monitors learned of them; thirdly, the exception they had taken to her telling some callers, by whose patronage they felt honored, that she could not afford a new set of furs.

Mrs. Ocksreider had spoken admiringly of the furs she had seen Margaret wearing one day, and had asked where she had bought them. And Margaret had replied that she had never bought any furs in her life, that she had always been too *poor*—Danny's wife admitting poverty!—and that these furs had been her grandmother's! Telling Mrs. Ocksreider, of all people, that she wore her grandmother's old clothes!

But Mrs. Ocksreider's reply had been puzzling to Jennie and Sadie.

"Oh, but my dear Mrs. Leitzel, to have had a grandmother who wore sable! It ought to admit you to the D. A. R.'s! No wonder you flaunt them and refuse to buy new ones!"

Then Margaret had further mortified them, before this same formidable social leader of New Munich, by refusing her invitation to join the woman's auxiliary of the Episcopal church, which, as Jennie and Sadie well knew, was made up of New Munich's "leading society ladies." Their horror had been great upon hearing Margaret say:

"It's very charitable of you to fancy that I'd be of the least use to you. But I've always hated women's auxiliaries."

And she said it with such a musical drawl that Mrs. Ocksreider, instead of showing how offended she must be, had laughed as if she had found it *funny*! But the idea of saying you hated women's auxiliaries! It was next thing to saying that you hated the Bible! Never had Jennie and Sadie experienced such a painful half hour as that of this call.

Fourthly, Daniel's sisters had at last discovered, through persistent prying, that his wife did not have an independent income; and Margaret, her wits sharpened by her new environment to recognize things at first unthinkable to her, saw that this discovery had made Jennie and Sadie feel more free than ever to dictate to her and interfere with her liberty.

All these little episodes combining to bring upon her the displeasure of the household, the night of the party found her in a not very cheerful frame of mind, though the deep satisfaction that was hers in the great friendship that had come into her life, the most vital human relation she had ever known, made it impossible for these smaller things to disturb her fundamentally, as otherwise they might have done.



Daniel's cold displeasure with her was greatly modified as he witnessed again to-night how attractive she undoubtedly was to the men of his world.

One event of that day had somewhat brightened for her the gloom of the home atmosphere. A belated wedding gift had come from Daniel's stepmother—a patchwork quilt—accompanied by a letter addressed to Daniel and his wife, written for the old woman by the district school-teacher. Daniel had read the letter aloud at the breakfast table:

"It's a very humble present I am sending you. But it's the work of my old hands, dear children, the last I'll ever do—and the love of my heart went into every stitch of

it. I was so proud that you sent me such a notice of your wedding—to remember your old mother, Danny, when you were so happy yourself. I've been working on the quilt ever since I got the notice about the wedding already; and now I'd like so well to see your wife, Danny. I'll try, if I am strong enough, to take the train in one of these days and see you both. I'll come back the same day, so as not to make any of you any extra work or trouble. I would like to see the lady you married, Danny, before I die, and give her an old woman's wishes for a happy, useful life with my good son that I am so proud of. I wish I could live long enough to see your first baby, Danny, but I guess it won't go many months

any more before I must go to my long home."

"Yes, that's always the way she talks—she 'hasn't long to live'—just to work on our feelin's so as to make us *give* her more!" Jennie had commented. "She has no need to come in here to see Margaret. She makes herself very bold to offer to. And she can't spare the car fare, little as what she has to go on. What's Margaret to her, anyhow? And she's likely to be too feeble to get *back* if she comes in. Then we'd have her on our hands, yet!"

But Margaret had spent an hour that morning in writing to Mrs. Leitzel, acknowledging her gift and telling her how glad she would be to see one who had done so much for Daniel when he was a boy. For their stepmother's self-sacrificing devotion to them all in their childhood had been made known to Margaret through many an unwittingly significant remark dropped in her presence. She concluded her letter:

I am coming out to see you very soon—certainly some day next week. Daniel will bring me if he has time. If not, I'll go myself. Until then, with my heartfelt thanks for the work of your dear hands, which I shall use with pride and with grateful thoughts of you, I am, your affectionate daughter,

MARGARET BERKELEY LEITZEL.

All that day, through the constant little rasping antagonisms that Margaret, despite her good intentions, seemed unable to avert in any intercourse between herself and the Leitzels, she felt the influence of the consolatory bit of kindness and good will that had come to her from the old woman in the country. And when she stood at night with her husband and his sisters to receive their guests—Sadie in pink satin—the gentle spirit of her aged mother-in-law was with her still in the background of her consciousness, softening the light of her eyes and making human the perfunctory smile on her lips as she repeated her conventional formula of

greeting over and over; so that people marveled at the apparent continued tranquillity of this incongruously assorted household.

When, later in the evening, Margaret was free to move about among her guests, Daniel's cold displeasure with her was greatly modified as he witnessed again to-night, as on many previous occasions, how attractive she undoubtedly was to the men of his world. His uncannily keen little eyes read in the faces of his male guests, as they approached and talked with Margaret, the covetousness they felt for this rare possession of his. No acquisition of all his acquisitive career had ever given him a more delectable joy than his realization of the worth, in other men's eyes, of his charming wife.

Had he overheard the view of her ventilated, though surreptitiously, by some of the guests over their supper, his satisfaction might have been somewhat modified.

"I think she's a scream!" declared Myrtle Deibert to the group at her table. "Did you hear what she *said* to me as we were leaving the country-club dance last Wednesday evening?—when I remarked to her, 'Your husband is so awfully in love with you, Mrs. Leitzel! Just look how he is *beaming* on you from clear across the room!' 'Scowling at me, you mean,' she corrected me. 'Don't you hear our taxicab registering out there while I linger to talk to you?'"

This anecdote was met with a shout of laughter, the point of which would certainly have remained obscure to Daniel Leitzel.

"Of course you all heard of her telling mother," said Miss Ocksreider, "that she hated women's auxiliaries? And that she wore her grandmother's old furs because she *couldn't afford* to buy new ones? Mother says"—she lowered her voice, and the group at the table closed in a bit closer to catch her

words—"that it was a perfect circus to see the consternation of Miss Jennie and Miss Sadie when she said she was *poor*. Isn't it queer how they are so proud of their money and yet so afraid to *spend* it?"

"Did you hear," inquired Mrs. Eshelman, "what Mrs. Leitzel said to me last Sunday after church when I told her I'd put a five-dollar gold piece on the collection plate in mistake for a nickel and I had half a mind to ask the usher to let me have it back? 'You might as well,' she said, 'for you know the *Lord* won't give you credit for more than five cents.'"

"She certainly does go to the ragged edge," Mr. Eshelman added his quota. "I asked her this evening whether she had been to hear the evangelist's address to women only, and she said no, what she wanted to hear was a talk to men only!"

"What do you think she said to me when I told her," said Mrs. Hostetter, "what a bad boy the son of the Presbyterian pastor is? 'This proverbial badness of ministers' children,' she said, 'is often, I think, just the hypocrisy of the minister breaking out.' 'But all ministers are not hypocrites,' I said to her, shocked. 'Of course unconsciously hypocrites,' she answered. 'They don't deceive any one else as they deceive themselves.' Isn't she *queer*?" added Mrs. Hostetter, genuinely puzzled.

"She's a peach!" declared Mr. Hostetter.

"Danny must think so," declared Mr. Eshelman, "to open up like *this* in her honor!" indicating the elaborate supper provided by the city caterer. "Terrapin, mind you, at Danny Leitzel's!"

"And the floral decorations!" breathed Miss Deibert, with an appreciative glance at the roses and palms that decorated the dining room. "It doesn't seem possible, *does* it?"

"This party is *costing* Danny something!" grinned Hostetter.

"And to think," said Mrs. Hostetter, "that Dan Leitzel has married a *penniless* bride—as she certainly gives it out that she *is*! It doesn't seem possible."

"The power of one little woman!" said Mr. Hostetter pensively. "I tell you that girl's eyes—and her voice—and her figger—and her teeth and lips—would melt any man's heart—even one of flint like Dan Leitzel's!"

"That will *do*, Jacob!" stiffly admonished Mrs. Hostetter.

"Will you look at that blue-glass owl on the sideboard!" said Miss Ockreider. "Wouldn't you think Mrs. Leitzel would have removed it before this party?"

"She wouldn't dare! Miss Jennie thinks it's choice!" responded Mrs. Eshelman. "She got it ten years ago at the ninety-nine-cent store for Danny's Christmas present, and she told me at the time that she knew it was an awful price, to pay for a mere pitcher, but that they needed a handsome ornament for the top of their sideboard. No, indeed, Mrs. Leitzel wouldn't dare discard that old owl!"

"How she manages to steer her way peaceably among the three members of this household!" murmured Miss Deibert.

"She's a wonder!"

"And she certainly knows how to keep her opinions to herself," said Mrs. Hostetter. "No one gets a word out of her as to what she thinks of her in-laws!"

"Then she *is* a wonder!" volunteered Hostetter.

"Wouldn't I like to be her father confessor!" exclaimed Miss Deibert. "I don't know what I wouldn't give for an X-ray view of her mind!"

It was a curious fact that the only person present at the Leitzels' notable party who was quite unimpressed by the expensiveness of the affair was

Margaret herself. What did impress her, as she chatted with her guests and ate her supper, was the subtlety with which one can be penetrated by the spiritual atmosphere of a given group; she felt so acutely that of this gathering to-night as compared with the fine aroma of any social collection of her Southern environment, with its old, inherited simplicity and culture. She had thought, in the first weeks of her New Munich life, that the difference must be only external, for she was not only democratically disposed by nature, but the rather socialistic theories with which her uncle had imbued her inclined her to a large view of any social discrepancies.

To-night, however, it was borne in upon her that she was an alien in this company; that she could more readily find a real point of contact and sympathy with the plainest sort of day-laboring people—with, for instance, the Leitzels' cook, who was at least genuine and not pretentious—than with these people who knew no ideals except those of material possession, and whose purpose in life seemed to be, on the part of the women, to outshine their acquaintances and kill time, and on that of the men to make money enough to allow the women to pursue this useful and noble career.

"People who are poor enough to be obliged to work," she spoke out her reflections to the lawyer, Henry Frantz, who happened to be sipping coffee with her, "have really purer and more wholesome views of life than—than we have." She indicated by a turn of her hand the company at large. "I begin to understand, Mr. Frantz, why, in the history of nations, we see decay set in just as soon as a climax of prosperity has been reached. To survive the deadening influence of great wealth—well, it's only the fittest among nations and individuals who are strong enough to do it, isn't it?"

"But it is only where there is a leisure class that we find art and culture," suggested Mr. Frantz.

"The great minds and the great characters of the world, however, have never come from an environment of wealthy leisure. In our own country, has any one of our really great presidents been educated in private schools? Nearly every citizen of eminent usefulness is a public-school product."

"A notable exception—your husband," he replied.

"Citizen of eminent usefulness?" she musingly experimented with her phrase. "Would Mr. Leitzel come under that head?"

"He's a lawyer of State-wide, if not national, reputation, Mrs. Leitzel."

"I know. Are they an eminently useful class—corporation lawyers? I ask merely for information. My ignorance on most subjects is unfathomable."

"Well, we couldn't get along without them."

"Corporations couldn't. But aren't we beginning to think we could get along without corporations?"

"Boneheads may think so. It's civilization that has built up corporations, and every time a corporation is dissolved, we take a backward step in civilization."

"If public utilities," said Margaret dogmatically, quoting her Uncle Osmond, "were conducted for the benefit—not of corporations—but by the government for the benefit of the whole people, we'd have a full treasury without taxing the people."

Mr. Frantz looked at her and broke into irrepressible laughter.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Leitzel, but that anything looking so girlish and pretty—that anything even remotely associated with my good friend, Danny Leitzel, should be giving out remarks like that—well, it's a little too much for me, you see! Did you and my friend

Danny exchange views on social economics before you were married?"

"We didn't have time to exchange views on anything. We knew each other just six weeks before we were married."

"And have been getting acquainted since?"

"I'm inclined to think a six weeks' acquaintance just as good as a lifetime one for finding out what kind of a mate your lover is going to make."

"Exactly! No good at all, eh?"

"Not much," she smiled.

"I wonder," speculated Mr. Frantz, eying her curiously, "if there was ever a married pair whose ideal of each other grew *higher* after marriage. Think so?"

"Surely; their lives being a daily unfolding of new beauties and excellencies to each other."

"Oh, but I'm afraid you're a sentimentalist."

"Southerners generally are—but they're saved, you know, by their un-failing sense of humor," she responded, turning from him to give some attention to the man seated on the other side of her at the little supper table.

Mrs. Leitzel's adroitness in avoiding thin ice was the despair of the gossips of New Munich.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Margaret's radiant happiness in the discovery she made on the very day after the party that she was embarked on the wonderful passage to motherhood, fraught with its strangely mingled pain and bliss, was somewhat tempered by the consciousness that the coming child would have to be a Leitzel. There was no escaping that catastrophe. She tried to persuade herself that the Leitzel characteristics, if properly educated, might not be so very lamentable; but her deep-down conviction that her child ran the risk of inheriting a small, mean

soul gave her no little anxiety and self-reproach.

"My penalty for trying to compromise with life's austerities," she told herself, with sad misgiving.

Her husband's joy and pride in the prospect of being a father consoled her somewhat—it was so human and normal of him; though even here the taint of greed entered in. He was so inordinately pleased that his money would not have to be left to Hiram's children.

Indeed, during the earlier weeks of her pregnancy, Margaret tried hard to keep her mind off the topics discussed in the bosom of the family, so fearful was she of the effect upon her child of her own recoil from the Leitzel view of life. She found that they never would get done talking about the cost of that party; it was evidently going to occupy them for the rest of their mortal lives. The worst of it was they so insisted upon impressing it upon *her*.

"Hiram never spent that much for a party for his Lizzie, and *she* brought her husband thirty thousand dollars. It ain't many husbands that would so spend for a wife that— Well, don't you think, too, Margaret, that Danny's awful generous, *considerin'*?"

"Considering what, Jennie?"

"Ach, Margaret, don't be so dumb! Considerin' you ain't *got* anythin'."

"Oh, yes, I have something—youth and health and intelligence and good temper. I'm a prize. Daniel thinks so."

"But you see," interposed Sadie, "our Danny could have had any of our rich town girls here."

"And yet preferred me. His good taste. The only instance of it I've ever noticed."

She knew the puzzled despair of her husband's sisters over their inability to make her humbly grateful that she, a penniless bride, had been "chosen" by their brother. But that she should fail to appreciate the expenditure for the party given in her honor was too much.

"Why, Danny's bills come to three hundred dollars, yet!" Jennie told her, with heat. "And Sadie ain't well yet from overeatin' that rich supper we had that night off of the Philadelphia caterer!"

"Yes, I feel it yet," said Sadie plaintively. "Just to think, Margaret, that Danny spent three hundred dollars for the party for you!"

"Did he get off so easily as that? The flowers were so abundant and the supper so nice, I should have supposed they cost more than that—if I had thought about the cost."

"Well, why *didn't* you think about the cost—when it was all for *you*?"

"I didn't think about it, my dears, because the cost of things doesn't interest me. I have so many more interesting things to think about. This, for instance," she said, holding up the dainty baby dress on which she had been sewing as they all sat together in the sitting room, awaiting Daniel's coming home to his noon dinner.

"But it's a wife's place to——"

Daniel's entrance cut short Jennie's admonitions. The dinner-table talk, however, scarcely relieved the tension on Margaret's nerves. Daniel was always expansive as to his business "deals" when he felt complacent, and to-day his state of mind was one of unusual satisfaction, for just before dinner Margaret had displayed to him—surreptitiously, to spare the virgin squeamishness of Jennie and Sadie—the baby things upon which she had been working, and his delight in them was like unto that of a woman. He was, therefore, talkative and confidential over his roast beef.

"Well, Margaret, you can be proud of the way your husband upholds Christian principles in this community. I received in my morning's mail a letter from the board of managers of the Y. W. C. A. thanking me for the stand I took at the meeting yesterday after-

noon of the stockholders of the country club—on the question of Sunday sports. Some of the men want tennis and golf allowed on Sunday, but I stand for the sanctity of the Sabbath, and I wouldn't give in one inch. I'm the biggest stockholder of the club, and they can't go against my vote in anything—I may say I *rule* the country club.

"One fellow, Abe Meyers, got up and declared he'd organize a *new* country club, before he'd 'submit to the tyranny of one hidebound Pharisee'! What do you think of that?" chuckled Daniel. "'The tyranny of one hidebound Pharisee!' Sour grapes, of course. He hasn't the cash or the influence to organize another club. I told them that so long as I was a member of that club, the sanctity of the Sabbath should be preserved. Golf and tennis six days of the week—but on the Sabbath *no sports*. And I said I knew I had behind me the support of our Christian community. You see, Margaret, if I withdrew, the club couldn't go on."

"That very fact," said Margaret, her voice rather weak, "ought, I should think, to make you unwilling to impose your theories upon the other members. *Noblesse oblige*, you know."

But Daniel was incapable of seeing this point of view.

"The evening papers," he continued, his eyes gleaming with satisfaction, "will give a full account of the meeting yesterday, and will publish, also, the letter of thanks sent to me by the Y. W. C. A. I handed that letter to a reporter of the *Intelligencer*. You'll see it in to-night's paper, Margaret."

"Oh!" breathed Jennie and Sadie, awe and admiration in their tones and worship in the glances sent across the table to Daniel.

"Here, Emmy," Jennie ordered the maid, "don't you see Mr. Danny's milk glass is empty? Fill it up. Do you like

these pickles, Danny? They're the first I opened, yet."

"They're of just precisely the degree of sourness I like," Daniel nodded approvingly.

"Danny's so much for sour," Jennie informed Margaret. "Yes, you took notice a'ready, I guess, how he eats sour all the time at his meals, even up to his pie. I have to put up a lot of pickles and chili sauce and chow-chow for him, ain't, Danny? And he says no one's sour tastes so good to him as what mine does. I don't know what he would do if I was taken and he couldn't have his sour any more."

"There's Heinz's fifty-seven varieties," said Margaret.

"Heinz's!" scoffed Jennie. "Our Danny eat that Heinz stuff, used as he is to good homemade sour! Well, Margaret, you don't mean to tell me you'd feed that to our Danny? I'd turn in my grave!"

"I'd 'feed him' Heinz's fifty-seven varieties and tell him I'd made them myself—a plan, you see, that would make Daniel happy, while it would save my time and energies for something more useful than pickles."

"You'd deceive him?" exclaimed Sadie, scandalized. "Tell a lie to your own husband, yet?"

"Is a lie ever justifiable?" asked Margaret ponderously. "History and psychology answer 'yes'—to the insane, the nervously distorted, and to spoiled and pampered men creatures."

"Well, you'd have a hard time foolin' our Danny! He ain't so easy fooled. A good thing he's got us to look after him if you wouldn't even put up sour for him!"

"Now I begin to see," said Margaret, "that the man, Heinz, creator of 'sour,' is a human benefactor and should have a noble monument erected to him by put-upon wives. I'll start the movement."

"A stroke of luck," Daniel here

broke into the dispute, "came to me to-day. You remember, Margaret, the leather store on the corner of Third and Prince Streets?"

"Yes."

"Danny owns near that whole block," Jennie quickly informed her, though Margaret's persistent indifference to such facts was a constant irritation to her and Sadie.

"I've been getting one hundred dollars a month rent for that store," Daniel stated, while his sisters listened breathlessly to such fascinating statistics. "Three months ago, George Trout, the renter, came to me and said he'd have to have more store room for his growing business and wanted me to extend the room back into the lot. He laid it off to me how I ought to do this for him because he had rented that room from me for the past fifteen years and had never been a day late with his rent, not even when I had suddenly and unexpectedly raised his rent two years ago from seventy-five to one hundred dollars a month. And he argued that he himself had paid for the repairs and the upkeep of his store-room for the past eight years; that his successful leather shop had increased the value of my property; and that I certainly owed it to him to extend the floor space.

"Well, I simply told him that if the place was too small for him, he was perfectly welcome to move; that I certainly wouldn't incur the expense of enlarging the store when I could so easily rent it any time as it was. He argued and fussed round my office and said he'd been my faithful tenant for fifteen years and I had never done a thing for him, and that I knew perfectly well he couldn't move his business, for there wasn't another vacant storeroom in the town in a location that wouldn't kill his business dead. Yes, I said I knew that all right.

"'And,' said he, 'I absolutely require more floor space.'

"'Yes, I know that, too,' I said, 'but it's no concern of mine. I have no stock in your business, Mr. Trout. I'm your landlord—and you know business is always strictly business with me. I can rent that storeroom the very hour you move out of it.'

"He tried to tell me again about his keeping up the repairs, but I cut that short and said he'd got my answer, and now I was busy. Well, I certainly was amused to see how mad he looked as he flung himself out of my office. But," said Daniel, his eyes narrowing to the look of cunning from which Margaret was learning to wince as from a touch on a bared nerve, "the affair has turned out just as I foresaw it would! That's the secret of my success, Margaret, as Jennie and Sadie can tell you. I look at every proposition, no matter how small a one, to find in it the main chance—the chance for *me*. I saw there'd be only one thing for Trout to do—enlarge the store at his own expense. No more than right that he should. No least reason why I should do it."

"Of course not!" exclaimed Jennie and Sadie in one breath, while Margaret, looking rather wan, did not raise her eyes from her plate, for the self-complacency of her husband's countenance was more than she could stand.

"So last week," Daniel went on, "when the changes in the storeroom were completed, I went in and took a look around. Trout spent about eight hundred dollars on the job. Of course, this enlargement increases the value of the property and demands higher rent. So yesterday"—Daniel smiled—"I notified him that his rent was raised twenty-five dollars a month. He came storming into my office and said the bills for the repairs should be sent to *me*. I pointed out to him that I couldn't be held legally responsible for them, as I had not had them made; and that he

could take his choice—pay the increased rent or get out. Well, you see, there was nothing else for him to do *but* pay the higher rent. Anything else spelled ruin for him. He knew that as well as I did. He had to swallow the pill," grinned Daniel, "though it did go down hard! Yes, that's the way I turn things, even little things, right around to my profit, Margaret. Pretty cute, isn't it?"

"If I were Mr. Trout," Margaret returned, very white, "I'd set fire to your store and burn it to the ground!"

There was an instant's silent, awful consternation. Then Margaret suddenly laid down her napkin and rushed from the room, every nerve in her sick and quivering with the physical and moral disgust she felt.

When, before returning to his office, Daniel went to their bedroom where his wife, weak and despairing, lay prone upon the bed, he found the door locked against him.

"I insist upon coming in, Margaret!"

"Go away!" she called faintly.

"Open the door!" he commanded.

"I won't! I can't! I don't dare to! I'm dangerous! Go away from me!"

"Get up and open this door!"

"If I did, I'd *scratch* you! Keep away from me!"

Daniel telephoned for the doctor.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Jennie, as they all awaited the coming of the physician in the sitting room. "Hiram's Lizzie never carried on like *this* when she was expectin'!"

"No, she certainly didn't," echoed Sadie, "for all she might have had a little more right to. While Margaret, here, comin' to Danny without nothin' at all, up and sasses him like what she did at dinner, yet! Don't it wonder you?"

Daniel, lounging in his own big chair before the fire, pouted like a thwarted, spoiled child.

"What got into her, anyhow, to act

so hystericky all of a sudden?" Sadie speculated.

"Sayin' she'd set fire to Danny's store!" exclaimed Jennie indignantly. "My, gracious!"

"It certainly does, now, beat all!" said Sadie mournfully.

"I certainly didn't think she'd turn out like *this*!" scolded Jennie. "You hadn't ought to have picked out a wife, Danny, without me lookin' her over for you first."

"I can't do anything with her!" snapped Daniel spitefully. "Nothing I can say will make her stop running with Catherine Hamilton. She tells me to my face she *won't* give her up. And she won't, either!"

"Och, Danny, I wouldn't *take* it off of her!" said Jennie harshly.

"Well, what can a man do?" he demanded fretfully.

"Discharge Miss Hamilton."

"She's invaluable to me. She's in my confidence in a business way. I *can't* discharge her. It wouldn't matter to her, anyway. Every lawyer in town that has any practice would like to employ her. What I'm afraid of is that she'll *resign*. Oh, if she, was afraid of losing her job, then I could easily fix Margaret!"

"It looks, Danny, as if Margaret took up with your clerk just to spite and worry you. For what else *would* she run with her for?"

"Well, if you'd hear them talking together, once!" Daniel responded.

"Well, if we did?" questioned Jennie curiously.

"You wouldn't understand a word they were saying," snapped her brother.

"Do they talk so dumb?" asked Sadie.

"They seem to think it means something—the stuff they get off to each other."

"It certainly does spite me, Danny," said Jennie, with sympathetic indigna-

tion, "to have your wife use you like this! And when I think how you could have married most anybody!"

"Here comes the doctor," announced Sadie. "Supposin' she won't leave *him* in her room?"

"Och, but that would make talk!" exclaimed Jennie. "I'll go up and tell her she *has* to open."

Margaret, meantime, her sudden gust of passion subsided, realized how foolishly she was acting.

"I can't say I didn't marry him with my eyes open," she prodded herself. "I owe him everything I can reasonably give him to make up for my lack of love."

Her sense of her obligation to Daniel did not, however, and never could, include the denial of such fundamental principles as her friendship with Catherine Hamilton, or her own personal freedom, in so far as it did not clash with his just rights.

Margaret was not so stupid as to suppose for a moment that she could, by any utmost effort on her part, lead Daniel to see a case like that of George Trout's store rent as *she* saw it. That he could boast of such "deals" proved him too hopelessly obsessed.

"If he were ashamed of it and tried to hide it, there might be some hope of redeeming him. As it is, I certainly shan't waste myself in any such futile endeavor. But if I outlive Daniel, I shall pay to George Trout or his heirs that eight hundred dollars on the very day that I get possession of my widow's third. Or, if I have a son, *he* shall discharge that debt!"

However, by the time Jennie knocked on her door, demanding admission for the doctor, she was in a sufficiently chastened frame of mind to receive both him and her husband with all the outward semblance of a dutifully happy wife.

TO BE CONTINUED.



Captain Ruggles' Experiment

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY H. MAYER

WE was sailin' close to Africkee
 At quite a pleasant pace,
 When Captain Ruggles says to me,
 Deep thought upon his face:
 "I've read in many books—at least,
 The kind that scholars buy—
 Ye can conquer any savage beast
 If ye look him in the eye."

We landed soon on Africkee
 To take a look around.
 Full seven doughty lads was we
 For entertainment bound.
 We spread our lunch beneath the shade
 And sat, a chatty corps—
 When sudden, from a handy glade,
 We heard a nawful roar.

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And, creepin' through the clutterin' trunks,
 Two dreadful eyes did glare,
 And an auburn mane, which made it plain
 A lion sure was there.
 We all turned pale but the captain hale,
 Who smiled, with a learned cry:
 "What a chance to prove that a savage beast
 Can be conquered by the eye!"

So down he crouched upon all fours,
 Just like the lion done,
 And toward that brute a glance did shoot
 As ackrate as a gun.
 And lo! the lion just stood there—
 Well, not ezactly tamed,
 But easin' his ferocious glare
 As if he felt ashamed.

Two solid hours o' jungle heat

The lion crouched and glared,
Abashed, yet hungry for his meat.

Two hours the captain stared.

At last he says: "Me eyesight's poor,

Me optic nerve ain't strong.

Has some one thought and gone and brought
Me spectacles along?"

We no one had—we all looked sad;

Whereat the captain sighed:

"If once I blink, I ruther think—

Since truth can't be denied—

This jungle cat will lose respect

For human power o' mind

And seek relief in human beef

Of my especial kind."

Four solid hours the captain gazed;

The lion done the same.

His claws was out, his eyes was glazed,

But he never quit the game.

At last a little buzz-buzz fly

Perched on the captain's ear.

"Sho—shoo! He's gittin' in me eye!"

Out shrieked that marineer.

And ere our aid we could impose,

That pest of all the flies

Had perched upon the captain's nose.

The captain closed his eyes.

The spell was broke. With a roaring choke,

That lion forth did bowl,

Made no delay to choose his prey,

But et the captain whole.

As toward our ship the oars we pressed,

We talked with deep intent

On the scientific interest

Of that experiment.

"The captain got the facts all right,"

Says Bill. Then up spoke Tim:

"'Tis proved by acts he got the facts,

But the lion sure got *him*."



The Activities of Henshaw Hook



by
Holman
F.
Day



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

OLD Sol Hook of Liberty Gore followed his nose into the presence of High Sheriff Aaron Sproul. It was a bulbous nose, chafed by the peckish air of November. Its glowing red hue suggested a port light so pointedly that Cap'n Sproul, with mariner notion of what was shipshape, informed himself that Mr. Hook ought to have a green ear to indicate star-board.

"It's the policy of the Hook family to ask for what it wants when it wants a thing it feels it has the right to ask for," stated Mr. Hook, with the composure of one who felt that he was on sure ground. "The Hook family swung the town of Liberty Gore for you in the last election, as I wrote you at the time, asking you to file said letter for future reference. So as to have something definite to start from, you might hunt up that letter and read it over."

"We can gain time and save wear and tear by starting from right where we now are," suggested Cap'n Sproul, not warming even under the glow of the red nose. "What do you want?"

"Glad to find you so up and coming, with a memory for past services as per letter mentioned, and not needing to refresh memory aforesaid. Up and coming and always ready—that's the policy of the Hook family. And when you appoint my son, Henshaw, as your deputy sheriff for Liberty Gore, you're going to be proud of him. Seeing that he is ready to take the job, I suppose we can consider it all settled."

"I've got a deputy in your town."

"You won't have one inside of a week. Old Tompkins is in the last stages. The doc don't give him four days to live. Up and coming and on the spot—that's the policy of the Hook family."

"It seems to be," commented the high sheriff dryly. "I'm pretty prompt myself, but I'm also more or less polite. I reckon we'll let old Tompkins pass out in peace before we talk about filling his shoes."

"The Hook family doesn't want to crowd, but, on the other hand, it doesn't want to be sidetracked. I have now filed intentions, so to speak. My son,

Henshaw, will wait on you with his papers on the day after Tompkins' funeral. That will be promptness mixed with the right amount of politeness. Hoping it will be all satisfactory, I will now take my departure, showing that it's the policy of the Hook family never to bother a busy man."

Sheriff Sproul was not exactly delighted by the manner and the methods of old Sol Hook, but he admitted to himself that zeal deserved some consideration, and therefore, when Henshaw Hook came around that week, the sheriff received him amiably.

Mr. Hook was a plump and bustling little man with a horrent red pompadour and beady eyes that were round and unwinking. His petition bore many names.

"I'm not passing any especial comments on the dead and departed," he said to the sheriff, "but it is a fact that your late deputy in Liberty Gore didn't have any high ideals in regard to his office. I am prepared to show a community how the law should be administered. I have not applied for the position without making a close and thorough study of all that relates to a sheriff's duty. I have made remarkable discoveries. I will be pleased to instruct any of your deputies who do not measure up to the proper standard. In short, I have thought that I might qualify as inspector and tutor of deputies if you should care to use me for that purpose."

"I have found that deputies get along best by strictly minding their own business," stated the sheriff. "You seem to have a good petition here, and nobody else has applied for the job. So I'm going to appoint you. But don't try to put on too many trimmings."

"I am obliged to take the thing very seriously. It's my nature. I go into all matters deeply," declared Mr. Hook.

"It's all right to be serious. It don't stand to reason that I want you to make

a joke of it. But don't go to putting too many fancy scallops onto a plain job."

"My work will speak for itself after I once get settled down to business, sir. I feel that you are going to be both surprised and delighted by what I do, and if you care to exhibit Liberty Gore as a model for the rest of the county to follow, it will be very pleasing to me."

The high sheriff did not relish his deputy's insistence on making so much of his new position, and was minded to call Mr. Hook back and warn him again, but the little man had hustled forth and away so rapidly that he was out of sight before the cap'n got his tongue unlimbered.

Two days later, the first of Deputy Hook's activities became apparent.

Old Sol Hook, distinguished by an obtrusive new constable's badge pinned on the outside of his coat, marshaled into the sheriff's office eleven sour-faced men and announced that he had brought prisoners.

"This is the first batch, just to show you that the general clean-up in Liberty Gore has begun strictly on time, with the Hook family following out its regular policy—up and coming and on the spot. Here are the commitment papers, all signed, due and proper, by Squire Voltaire Hook. And I can vouch for his reliability, because he is my brother."

Sheriff Sproul blinked rather grimly when he received the documents which testified to the efficient teamwork of the Hook family.

"It's surprising how many laws are broken when you get to studying the thing right down to cases," stated Mr. Hook, with much complacency. "My son goes into things very deep. Always has been inclined that way. He and I ain't going to say anything about the dead and departed, but old Tompkins was so cross-eyed in his intellects that he couldn't tell a broken law from

a batch of sour-milk biscuits. Things have been let go to rack and ruin in our town. Loose ends everywhere. Here's Enoch Blake," he explained, jabbing thumb at one of the sullen prisoners. "He has been committing aggravated trespass for thirteen years by hauling wood across one end of our land where he didn't have any right of way. We've got him on more than a thousand counts, but the squire only made one case of it—thirty days, fifty dollars fine, and the costs of action."

Cap'n Sproul was pawing over the papers.

"Here's five other cases of trespass," he growled.

"Exactly! Across the same land. Can't take up one man and let five others go free. That ain't law. That ain't justice."

"And here's five cases of breaking the Sabbath."

"Exactly. Once again, exactly! Five hired men who work for Blake and *et als*, as the law puts it! They hauled that wood on Sundays. In making a clean sweep in the law, you've got to hew to the line. There's eminent authority for that."

"Maybe there is," admitted the sheriff. "But **this thing** looks to me like a condemned holdup."

"I ain't called upon to criticize statements coming from a high sheriff," said Mr. Hook, rebuke in his tones. "But I must say that remarks of that kind right in the presence of prisoners ain't helpful in keeping the laws where they ought to be, and might cause trouble if repeated outside."

"No matter what laws are, common sense plays considerable of a part in affairs between men," insisted the cap'n. He shook the papers at old Sol Hook. "Your son gets over fifty dollars in fees for serving papers, making arrests, and tending court, and so forth. Your brother gets as much more in court fees. And you pull off your mileage

and other general grab by bringing the prisoners in."

"Ain't that the law, made and provided by the statutes?" asked Mr. Hook. "Legislature made the laws. Is anybody going to pick and choose what laws shall be enforced? Is any officer called on to do his work for nothing? Here are the prisoners and you're the high sheriff. I don't see that there's anything else to be said."

"I'm going to say something," declared the man who had been identified as Enoch Blake. "I suppose I did trespass, but I didn't understand it was going to be made a prison crime, and these other men didn't, either. There ought to be some common decency and neighborly kindness showed between folks in the same town. And if that Henshaw Hook proposes to keep on in the way he has started and in the way he threatens to keep on, we'd better take the word 'Liberty' out of the name of our town."

"Or else take Hook out in the woods and hang him," suggested another prisoner vengefully.

"Look here! You all seemed to want him for deputy in your town," stated the sheriff. "About every voter signed his papers."

"When a man gabs at you enough, you'll sign 'most anything," was the acrid comment of Mr. Blake. "We didn't know we were choosing a dam-nite bomb with red hair on it. He hadn't ever done anything before but loaf around and read books and run up store bills for old Sol to pay. We have come down here en masse to show up what you have got tied to you, sheriff. Now we're going to send out for a lawyer and have him habus corpus us out of this jail, and we'll appeal them trespass cases to a higher court than old Volt Hook."

"That's more law and that's your lookout," agreed Mr. Sol Hook with serenity. "Law is a good thing all



"You don't know me very well as yet, but you and I are going to get terribly well acquainted right here and now, unless you take that statement back."

round when it is used right. In the meantime, I'd like to have my papers signed, sheriff, so I can collect my fees."

And the sheriff was obliged to obey that request.

"But I want you and other associated Hooks to mind your eye after this," said Cap'n Sproul.

"Not meaning to state in the presence of witnesses that you want us to let laws be broke right and left?" inquired the undaunted constable.

"You go back and tell that son of

yours to hunt up in one of his books what common sense means, and if he can't find out, I'll come up and give him a few free lessons."

Mr. Hook's bulbous nose glowed with deeper fires, as if determination had settled there with all its warmth.

"It would be a queer thing for the voters of this county to read in the newspapers that a deputy sheriff had been kicked out of office by his superior because aforesaid deputy had been active and efficient. The Hook

family has a policy that can't be dented by slander or abuse. That's all I can say, and I'll declare it from the house-tops and take my chance with the public."

After Mr. Hook had departed, and after a lawyer, by the exercise of his craft, had rescued the citizens of Liberty Gore to wait for the action of the higher court, the sheriff pondered on the intractability of the Hook family and pretty nearly made up his mind to discard Henshaw Hook summarily from his staff.

But when Hiram Look, the sheriff's especial friend and ready adviser, called into the office for an after-dinner smoke, the old showman advised against any hasty action. He reminded Cap'n Sproul that the special legislative committee was still investigating sheriffs and the administration of their offices, and that in those touchy times the contention of the Hooks that they were merely getting after lawbreakers in active fashion might bring discredit on a high sheriff who ordered them to be less active.

"What a man wants to do, as an officer, and what he'd better do, are two different propositions," declared the sagacious Hiram Look. "You seem to have a hornet in your net—but you'd better let him buzz a little longer."

However, within a few days the buzzing in the region of Liberty Gore grew too insistent to be disregarded by the high sheriff of Cuxabexis County.

He got half a dozen more or less incoherent telephone calls; the persons who talked with him declared that the situation was too complex to be discussed over the telephone. They demanded that he come up and straighten matters out. He got some letters which revealed wrath and agitation; the writers were too much wrought up to go into details. The burden of the complaints was that the oligarchy of the Hooks had turned the town upside

down. And it was conveyed to Cap'n Sproul in no uncertain terms that he was held responsible for the actions of a man whom he had appointed to serve as deputy sheriff.

Liberty Gore was not on the line of the railroad, and the sheriff drove in and stabled his hired horse at the tavern without attracting much attention. It was near noon, and he fortified himself with a good dinner, feeling that he needed sustenance in order to tackle the Hook affair with due and suitable energy. He called for roast beef, rare, and ate plenty of it, remembering that Showman Hiram Look had once assured him that any animal, man or tiger, could put a proper edge on a temper with plenty of raw meat. Then he went out and sat down on the tavern porch, waiting till he was sure that the rare roast beef had taken effect.

The landlord was sociable and inquisitive, and he came and sat down beside the cap'n.

"Am I miscalling you when I say that you're High Sheriff Sproul?" asked the tavern keeper.

"No, but don't say it too loud just yet. I don't want to be advertised till I get myself into the right frame of mind to tackle some business I've got in this town."

"There's plenty of business here waiting for you, sheriff. You poulticed us good and proper when you made Henshaw Hook our deputy sheriff. Of course, I signed his petition, but they tell me you're a good judge of men, and it seems to me that you ought to have used that good judgment and kept him off'n us."

The cap'n promptly resented this amazing arraignment.

"When you signed Hook's petition, you ought to have signed another one asking for a general guardian, and then I might have acted," he grunted. "I judge you need dry nurses and advisers in this town."

"If there's either of us going to lose his temper in this little talk, I reckon I'm the one to do the losing," complained the landlord. "I never sold a drop of lick in this hotel in my life. I'm strict temperance, and I always will be. But that Henshaw Hook came rampaging in here right in the busy time of day, when everybody was gawping, and he seized two bottles of dandelion wine my wife made for sickness. He took my barrel of cider vinegar and all the cooking extracts out of the pantry, and put an everlasting smirch onto my place as being a rum hole. And the old hens of the temperance society, being always ready to believe anything, are warning folks against my hotel, and have canceled their annual dinner I've always served for 'em. That's what your chum has done to me!"

"I have just eaten a lot of your raw, tough meat and am working a wire edge onto my disposition, and I advise you to apologize for calling him a chum of mine." The sheriff put both hands on the Boniface's shoulders and glared into his host's shifting eyes. "You don't know me very well as yet, but you and I are going to get terribly well acquainted right here and now, unless you take that statement back."

"If you ain't in snucks with him, then I'm sorry I said it. But that's the way it has seemed to us here in town."

"It won't seem so much like it after I find out what's what and get done with this case," stated the sheriff with vigor.

A man had come out from the dining room during the progress of the conference and listened while he stood on the porch and picked his teeth. He approached Cap'n Sproul and saluted.

"Did I hear right when I gathered that you're the county sheriff?"

"You seem to have gathered the right bouquet," admitted the cap'n ungraciously.

"Then you're the gent I want to do business with. My name is Dow, and I represent a wholesale grocery concern. You have got a deputy sheriff in this town who ought to be in the doghole of your jail. He is helping to flimflam me and my house. I have been held up here now for five days, paying board at this hotel and trying to get my business straightened out."

"He is right," averred the landlord. "He is another sufferer. The place is full of 'em."

"And what's your special ailment?" inquired the high sheriff.

"I sold a bill of goods to Marengo Hook, a cousin of that deputy of yours."

"How many of them Hooks are there in this town, anyway?" demanded the sheriff with heat.

"Pretty nigh as many as there are on my hall hatrack," said the hotel man. "And all of 'em just as crooked."

"I got a tip that he was stocking up extra, so as to make a killing of his failure, and I got a writ of replevin so as to take my goods back. I had your deputy serve that writ, and now I can't get my goods."

"Well, whose fault is that? Have you ordered him to take the goods out?"

"No! Blast it to blazes, I have had to order him to leave 'em stay where they are in the store cellar!"

"Then ain't you getting suited?"

"Not by a damsite!" exploded the drummer. "There's snigdom being worked on me. That Henshaw Hook didn't want to serve that writ—he didn't want to move those goods out. And nobody but a hellion like him could have thought up the scheme he is working."

"That's right," said the landlord. "Henshaw Hook has spent his whole life studying up on tricks, and now he is bunching 'em."

"He has put a live skunk into that



He lighted its caudal feathers with great dexterity.

cellar with them goods, and it's roaming around loose, and if it ever gets peeved over anything, them goods won't be worth a tin kittle in tophet. I know he put that skunk in there. His cousin ain't got brains enough to run a store, much less think up an idea like that. They're going to stave me off till he can fail. I call on you, sheriff, and I ask you to do your duty."

"Just what do you figger that duty as being?"

"Get out my goods for me and get 'em out sound."

"Oh, that's all you expect me to do, is it?" asked the sheriff, with sarcasm.

"I have a right to ask it, seeing that you're high sheriff and are here on your job. It ain't up to me to tell you how to operate. You're paid for knowing how. A sheriff is expected to understand how to handle any emergencies."

"That's right," indorsed the tavern man. "Taxpayers are entitled to get the worth of their money when they elect a man to high office."

The cap'n divided blistering gaze between them.

"I suppose that in order to be the kind of a sheriff you men would indorse at the polls, I ought to soft-foot into that cellar and trot that skunk on my knee and hum hymns to him till I could get him coddled up to the point where he'd surrender claims and interests in that stock of groceries. But if anybody ever tells you that I claim to be a natural-born skunk tamer or ever intend to post up as an amateur, you tell him he's a liar, and I'll back you up in any damage that results."

"Then you back down in a case where your duty is plain before you—the court's writ ordering you?"

"If you ever see me backing up—"

meaning that I go into the business of skunk catching—you have the insanity board sit on my case. I'll need that attention."

"The taxpayers in this county better make a few changes in officers," observed the drummer to the landlord.

"They won't need any advice on that point after they hear what has happened in Liberty Gore," remarked the landlord to the drummer.

Sheriff Sproul, evincing disdain and disgust by muttered remarks addressed to himself in default of any listener he considered worthy, started to walk off the porch. But he was halted by the landlord.

"If you won't listen to a man who has had a smirch put on his hotel and his character, or to a man who is liable to have something even worse put onto a stock of groceries, then you'd better look at that picture, Mr. Sheriff, and let your feelings be harrowed up enough so that you'll act."

A tall man whose flapping frock coat and white tie proclaimed that he was a clergyman was marching stiffly past, wearing a look that was halfway between anger and shame. Upon his arm hung a diminutive woman whose expression also showed much perturbation. Close behind them promenaded a big woman whose face displayed vengeful determination.

"There goes Reverend Dunn, and with him is Widder Todd, and they're being chased by that she-panther—and she's Old Maid Tryphena Hook. There's another one of your Hooks, Mr. Sheriff. There's persecution for you! By thunder, you're here and there's more of your duty, and when it's the case of an elder, you've got to act."

He stepped to the edge of the porch and shouted a hail to the little procession which had passed.

"Elder Dunn, here's the high sher-

iff of this county, and you'd better appeal to him to do his duty."

The clergyman whirled on his heels, swinging around the little woman, and they retraced their steps. The big woman came close behind them.

"It's full time that somebody appeared in this town with power and authority. We have been beseeching those in high places," boomed the parson.

Sheriff Sproul plainly showed that he did not relish the looks of this new combination—two women and a man. It was three-cornered trouble that promised complications.

"I have with me my intended bride," proclaimed the clergyman. "I am escorting her with me so as to show to all the world that we have nothing to hide or be ashamed of."

"Then you show that you have no shame in you," declared the big woman.

"This female is the own sister of Beelzebub. In our goings and comings, she dogs our steps. She lurks in the highways and the byways. Where we go, there she goes also—but the pursuit of affection by sainted Ruth was not like this pursuit. It is persecution that is devilish, and I use the strong word advisedly."

"I can use stronger words," stated the pursuer. "I am glad the high sheriff is here to hear me. He is a friend of my brother Henshaw, and he will not condone or help any miserable, falsifying, whited sepulcher that hides himself behind religion, so as to fool and deceive and cheat a poor, weak woman like me. He brags and boasts that he is going to marry that widder. But he is pledged and promised to me. He has given his word to me."

"That is false, sheriff," insisted the minister. "I boarded with this female in my days of widowerhood, and there was never word between us except the commonplaces of the household or discourse on the affairs of the church. I

never by look, word, or deed gave her to understand that I felt aught of interest in her."

"You et my vittles and praised them, and I doctored you when you were sick, and you gave me a book of poetry. And I consider that courting. It was so considered in my young days, and times ain't changed any."

"It was her brother who put such notions into her head after he heard I intended to wed," cried the clergyman. "She never thought of such a thing till he poisoned her mind."

"He is a student with a wonderful brain, and I thought of a lot of things I had forgotten—just talking it over with him," declared Miss Hook. "I propose to have my rights—but first I shall show this town what kind of a man you are."

"Look here, all of you!" protested the sheriff, flapping his hands, his ears dinning by the contention. "I'm no judge and jury, and this is a cussed poor place to try a breach-of-promise case. What have I got to do with your squabble? I've got business to tend to." He tried to leave, but the clergyman set hands upon him and detained him—and the sheriff reflected that it would not be proper to wrestle with a parson on the main street.

"You do have something to do with the case, sir, for I'm being persecuted by your deputy in this town, and he hides himself behind what he calls the law. He has set this female to dog my steps, so as to drive me to some desperate word or act that he and his can use against me. She sits in meeting and glares at me, to my shame and confusion and to the detriment of our church. When I turned on her at last, with man's honest anger, I was arrested by your henchman for using threats, and was put under bonds by his uncle, who is a justice of the peace. And only by good luck and exertion did I avoid

being carried off to jail by his father, who is a constable."

"Thank the good Lord Gull, the Hooks amount to something in this town and stand together and protect their own, and it's their policy to get what is coming to 'em," said the maiden suitor for Reverend Dunn's affections. "And I want you to understand, Mrs. Todd, that you are going to be sued and attached for stealing away what belongs to me."

"I never belonged to you, woman!" thundered the parson.

"Then you shouldn't have billed and cooed and made me believe it. My brother opened my eyes when he began to talk to me. You are a friend of our family, high sheriff, and I want to ask you to listen to some of the things this whited sepulcher said to me, and then you'll say——"

"I'm going to say something to the whole of ye, and say it mighty short," roared the sheriff, baited until he was distracted, noting that the discussion was drawing a crowd. "I'm going to say, 'Good day!'"

He pushed past the parson, thrust the drummer out of his path with sturdy elbow, and started away. His sole aim and intent was to locate one Henshaw Hook, the nub of the heated mass of occurrences that seemed to be piling upon Liberty Gore. He decided that it was not up to him to take those clamoring citizens into his confidence. He had not relished the manner in which they had approached him. He did not know, himself, exactly what he would do to Henshaw Hook, provided that he discovered, on further investigation, that his deputy was as perniciously busy as detractors claimed.

"In together, hand in glove, to ruin this town. That's plain to be seen," said the landlord, not trying to moderate his tones.

"That's why he appointed the crook to office," suggested the drummer, also



A moment later, Elder Dunn, voicing unclerical sentiments, ran out of the house and galloped up with coat tails flapping and upflung arms.

vociferous. "Politics is getting to be a rotten mess in these days. Us folks in the city know it."

"Alas for those in high places in these times when rulers rage and unrighteousness reigns!" observed the clergyman. "But retribution will surely follow, and the meek and the persecuted will lift their heads and sing hosanna."

These sentiments made the cap'n grunt and grate his teeth, but he cursed aloud roundly to himself when he heard Miss Tryphena Hook declare again, in ringing tones, that High Sheriff Aaron Sproul had come up to that town as a friend of the Hook family, to show the citizens that the Hooks were not safe folks to meddle with. To be classed as a friend of Henshaw Hook

was more aggravating than to be hailed as an enemy of all the rest of the citizens, was his sour reflection. Therefore, when he saw the rubicund nose of Constable Sol Hook far down the street, the cap'n headed for it with the haste of a moth seeking a flame.

"I'm glad to see you in town, Mr. High Sheriff," announced Constable Hook, with amiability. "General reforms here are fast taking effect. High or low, rich or poor, we intend to see all used alike when it's a matter of breaking the law. We can't show you a model town just yet—but it's fast coming."

"Hook, I want you to understand me and drop all this spread-eagle gab of yours, or I'll do something to dim that red lantern you wear in the middle of

your face. I have let you do most of the talking when we have met before, and you haven't got very well acquainted with me. Hold on, there! No more of that Hook policy guff to me! If you Hooks are putting anything over on me, there'll be a wrasse in this town that'll flatten a good many things that are now standing. Where is that red-headed sanup of a son of yours?"

"Off, *tending to duty."

Do you know just where? I want him, and I want him mighty quick."

"I haven't got any official knowledge of where he is right at the present moment, and so I can't tell you," declared Mr. Hook, with a fine assumption of respect and complete innocence.

"Then I'll begin to investigate what you know about the Hook operations here. And you answer what you know and leave off all trimmings. Understand?"

"You want me to be strickly official, I take it, sir?"

"I do."

"Very well," assented Mr. Hook, saluting.

"What do your folks mean by seizing cider vinegar and flavoring extracts from that tavern back there?"

"Can't tell about stuff officially until it has been analyzed, sir. Henshaw is now analyzing. That's one of his lines. We found lickier in a drug store, two billiard rooms, and in a fruit man's peanut roaster, and we didn't want it said that we hadn't made a clean sweep. Furthermore, that landlord had been threatening to bolt the ticket, and I'm a politician and propose to hold this town in line for you."

"I don't want votes that you have to go after with a club in one hand and a rock in the other," blazed the sheriff. "If you try to build up a political machine here by using me for an excuse, I'll hamstring you, Hook. Now answer me another question! Have

you or any of your associated Hooks planted a polecat over in that store cellar, to work a snigdom on creditors?"

"Not having official knowledge of any skunk, can't say anything about the critter."

Not by flicker of eyelid or change of countenance did Mr. Sol Hook betray guilt.

"Are you promoting, aiding, and condoning the persecution of that elder?"

"We are only doing what you'd do in your own family, Sheriff Sproul. We are protecting a lone female. And a white necktie ain't supposed to excuse any man from coming up to the scratch."

"You know, don't you, that about everybody in this town is complaining about what the Hooks are doing?"

"Well, the Bible says that there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth when punishment is handed out to the wicked. And any man who proceeds to enforce the laws strickly to the line ain't in any ways popular. I want to ask you, Sheriff Sproul, if you have ever laid down on the job when parties have houted you for doing your duty? That ain't the rule of conduct in the sheriff's department, is it?"

"Not by a blamed sight, sir!"

"Then I can't see but what the Hooks are doing just what you want them to do," retorted the constable, with serenity.

"This whole business is like trying to scoop soft soap on a shingle," muttered the cap'n. He had had plenty of experience with persons who blamed him for zeal in his duties, and he reflected that condemning the Hooks on say-so might be an unwise policy for a high sheriff.

In the midst of his ponderings came the landlord, malevolently bearing fresh news.

"And now there's more of it, Mr. Sheriff," he announced. "If you can

break off your sociability with your friend, there, for a moment, I'd like to say that Henshaw Hook has got some kind of a paper from old Voltaire Hook, and is down at Widder Todd's place. Fellow who just drove past there has brought the news, and the widder has started for home."

"He is down there, eh? What is he doing?"

"Maybe is setting fire to the house or killing off the stock, having a writing from old Voltaire allowing him to do it. No knowing what the Hooks will think they've got authority to do next in this town."

"Have my horse hitched in and show me the way there," commanded the cap'n. "Constable Hook, you go along, and if you can grab up any more Hooks, bring 'em. If there's a general round-up, I may be able to get some head and tail out of this business."

Widow Todd's domicile was on a tidy farm about a mile outside the village, and the sheriff made the distance in good time. Henshaw Hook did not appear to be perturbed by the descent of his superior. He greeted the sheriff with an amiable wave of the hand, and made some reference to the fact that it seemed to be a busy time in official circles.

"You go into the house along with the rest of this bunch," directed the sheriff, beholding the alarmed face of Widow Todd at one of the windows and understanding that the lady was now installed at home.

"I'll be glad to do so," replied Deputy Hook. "I've got business to transact in there."

Before the sheriff could open his mouth to begin his queries, the deputy, who had walked into the parlor in the lead, advanced on the widow, who fell back upon a sofa, fairly gasping with apprehension.

"Be careful how you pester this lady. She is my intended wife," warned the

clergyman. "I notify the world, that I'm here to protect her."

"You may need a little protecting on your own account before we get done with this thing," stated Henshaw Hook, his beady eyes glistening with spite and his mane bristling. "You have done considerable talking about me behind my back. Here's notice of suit for fifty thousand dollars for slander. I consider my damage amounts to that, seeing that I'm trying to establish a record for the whole State as a model deputy sheriff. Here's also notice of suit for one thousand dollars for breach of promise. You'd only be worth that sum as a husband. As to my character, it's a different matter."

He turned on the widow.

"I have already attached a chip in your dooryard, as the law provides, but seeing that you're here present now, I'll hand you papers in a suit for twenty-five thousand dollars, charge being alienation of affections. My sister thinks she is damaged to that extent by having a little nincompoop like you get any kind of a man away from her."

When Widow Todd, unused to legal procedure, already scared out of her wits, heard that sum mentioned, and saw the ominous document shoved in her direction, she screamed and fainted.

A cupful of cold water brought by the parson did not revive her. Cap'n Sproul, ever at the fore in emergencies, chafed her hands and called for smelling salts. But none of the visitors knew the ways of the house.

"Bring feathers, then," roared the sheriff. "Bring some feathers and burn 'em under her nose."

"Orders are orders," responded Henshaw Hook, with alacrity.

He ran to a cage in one corner of the parlor, yanked open the door, and pulled out a squalling parrot.

"Orders are orders—and it's the first feathers handy," he informed himself.

Before anybody in the room under-



They went through the village at headlong gait, an amazing spectacle of sheriff and deputy attending to some sort of business in most intense fashion.

stood exactly what he was about, and before he could be prevented, he held the squirming and vociferous bird tail up in one hand and lighted its caudal feathers with great dexterity.

Widow Todd revived.

She opened her eyes while the officious Hook was rushing at her with the parrot. When he set match to the feathers, she rose with a shriek in

which fury and outraged affection for her pet were mingled. All her past rancor and present hatred in regard to the Hooks combined in that one supreme and psychological moment to give her will and power that made of her a diminutive thunderbolt. She launched herself upon Henshaw Hook and tore her nails into his unguarded face and beat her fists into his beady

eyes. Her onslaught stifled the fire in the parrot's tail, and when the amazed deputy released the bird, that resentful coadjutor of the Widow Todd got in chancery in its gripping beak the finger of its assailant.

It was rout complete in the case of Henshaw Hook. He turned and fled, and shook the parrot off his bleeding finger as he ran.

Sheriff Sproul hurried on the heels of his deputy. He felt that he had a few remarks to address to that gentleman, and he did not care to remain longer in the parlor. The enraged widow appeared to be casting about for more objects of her vengeance.

"Hook," grated the cap'n, when he overtook his man in the dooryard, "you are better posted on more things not to do than any other man I ever saw. You get into my wagon and come along with me, where I can talk to you out and away from this hullabaloo."

"Leave go my hands, Elder Dunn!" the widow screamed within doors. "I say I will go out there and tear the hide off that man who told Henshaw Hook to burn my darling's tail feathers. He has come into this town to aid and abet our enemies."

"We all know that in this town," boomed Elder Dunn. "And he will receive the punishment of the unrighteous all in good time."

"I reckon you hear that, Hook," observed Sheriff Sproul grimly.

"Duty is duty," affirmed the deputy, sucking his wounded finger between the words.

"You get in here."

"And I've got one more duty, sheriff. Just one moment!"

He rushed away, turned the corner of the barn, and promptly reappeared, lugging a crate in which there were squawking ducks. He tossed the crate into the rear of the sheriff's wagon.

"What does this mean?" demanded

the cap'n, struggling with his alarmed horse.

"All mentioned in the writs—cover costs," panted the deputy. "I had the two crates hitched onto my motor cycle—but it's better to carry one in the wagon. Just one more moment!" Again he rushed around the corner of the barn.

"My precious ducks! They are stealing my ducks!" declared the frenzied widow. "Elder Dunn, be a man instead of a minister for five minutes and pummel those robbers."

Sheriff Sproul, as sailor, had always feared and hated horses, and this hired nag had found out that the new man in the wagon was an unskillful reinsman; he was having much trouble to restrain the animal, who was trying to discover what the clamor of the frightened ducks meant.

A moment later, Elder Dunn, voicing unclerical sentiments, ran out of the house and galloped up with coat tails flapping and upflung arms, proposing to grab the horse by the head and prevent the sheriff's departure.

And in the next breath there was the staccato popping of a motor cycle's engine behind the barn.

Phaëthon himself could not have subdued the terrorized horse at that moment. The brute took the bit in his teeth and ran. Out from around the corner of the barn sped Deputy Hook, astride his sputtering cycle, with a crateful of squalling hens strapped on behind.

"One moment, sheriff!" he called. "I'll lead the way to the village."

But it was evident that the sheriff's steed did not propose to allow that unknown terror behind him to take the lead in that race. The road was narrow, and although Deputy Hook made valiant efforts to pass, he only succeeded in pulling up close on the cap'n's wheel and adding to the fright of the horse.

"You condemned howlaferinus, drop astern with that bunch of Injy crackers!" bellowed the frantic cap'n. "Drop astern, I tell ye!"

"Just one moment, sheriff! Give me a slice of road and I'll catch his head for you," squealed Mr. Hook, above the uproar of his engine.

"I'm being run away with! Fend off! Muzzle that skywhoopus of yours!"

But it was evident that Mr. Hook—with the up-and-coming policy of the Hook family in his mind—did not propose to desert his superior in stress of circumstances. Twice he came abreast the maddened horse, and once he forged ahead, driving the runaway into the gutter and over stones that nearly wrecked the wagon and bounced the cap'n high in air. Only by utmost efforts did the sheriff manage to keep his seat. The language he shot over his shoulder at the officious pursuer would have paralyzed anybody except the devoted Hook.

And then they went through the village at headlong gait, an amazing spectacle of sheriff and deputy attending to some sort of business in most intense fashion. Folks rushed to doors and windows, and comment unheard by them streamed after the exhilarating race.

"I'll admit there's no knowing what that blamed sheriff's department is going to do next in this town," observed the tavern keeper to Mr. Dow, wholesale groceries, viewing the startling affair from his porch. "But I would just like to know what particular thing they're up to now."

"Looks like they'd gone into the stealing business together and was trying to get to market with them fowls before prices go down," said Mr. Dow sourly.

"Well, whatever it is, they're certainly on their way. Wonder if they think, because they are sheriffs, they

can break all the speed laws in this town!"

However, Cap'n Sprout and his energetic escort did not continue to break the speed laws after they had passed through the village. There was a long hill beyond, and even terror cannot wing a horse's heels forever. The animal began to weaken on the steep part of the hill, and the cap'n was able to tug him to a halt, standing up and sagging back on the reins. Then he leaped out and caught the horse's head. When Mr. Hook abandoned his motor cycle in the gutter and rushed up to grasp the bridle on the other side, the cap'n deliberately, calmly, and forcibly booted him back into the gutter.

"You let that hint last you till I can get my breath and inform you as to other details," remarked the sheriff.

And when he had made sure that his horse was calmed, he turned the animal around and headed him back toward the village.

"You load on those hens and get in here, Hook."

There was cold menace in the tones, and the deputy obeyed. When he had climbed in, the sheriff started the horse and said: "By way of beginning our little talk, I'll announce to you that you are fired now and forever. That kick was meant to intimate that much to you."

"I have only done my duty——"

But the sheriff promptly checked the protest.

"You are fired for strickly personal reasons between you and myself, said reasons beginning when you started that popgun business behind me and didn't have common sense enough to quit. I'm firing you because you're a rap-headed fool, who has proved it beyond all doubts. And so there ain't any chance for arguments about this duty business. There's no man scares me nigh into the grave and then holds a job that I've got the disposal of.

Hook, I'm going to take you back to that village and have you start in with me where you begun your foolhead business, and we'll clean decks. If you hang back, I'll start action against you for criminal conspiracy and have the Hook family sawing cordwood in the yard of the Scotaze jail. The trouble with you has been you had the disposition of a regular first-class renegade and only the common sense of a hen thief to go with the disposition. The more you help me in straightening all matters out, the better it will go with you. Any man who will put a live skunk into a store——"

"It's only a stuffed one," pleaded the cowed Mr. Hook. "I don't want it made any worse for me than it really is. The family overpersuaded me in some things."

"Keep right on being helpful in the way you're doing and you'll find me meeting you halfway," said the sheriff, his tones indicating that he was considerably placated. Mr. Henshaw's admission in regard to the skunk had suggested to the sheriff an opportunity to begin in admirable fashion the rehabilitation of a high sheriff's reputation for general efficiency.

Therefore, after he had hitched his horse in the village square, he walked directly into the Hook store, marched down cellar, and emerged a bit later, bearing a trophy.

It was a stuffed skunk whose beady eyes suggested the optics of Henshaw Hook.

The cap'n carried the figure across the street, holding it gingerly by the tip of its tail, and tossed it, with a fine air of scorn, at the feet of the amazed Mr. Dow.

"If I'm obliged to come away up here to capture a dead polecat for you, I can do it. You ain't sure, are you, that the landlord didn't put that in the cellar to keep you here paying him board money?" he added, boring the blinking tavern keeper with disconcerting stare.

The sheriff went up on the hotel porch and faced the citizens who had been attracted to the square.

"I want to announce that Henshaw Hook, for reasons best known to myself, is no longer deputy sheriff in this town. I'm now 'tending to the duties of the office, and will see to it that decks are swabbed and all tag ends clewed up before I leave this town. And if there is anybody here present in hearing who thinks I ain't able to do it or ain't intending to do it, he'd better stand forth and be heard—and then take the consequences!"

But although High Sheriff Sproul waited patiently, no citizen stood forth. They stared at him with the submissiveness of sheep awaiting the orders of the shepherd. And then he began to straighten things out.





Happy People

By Grace Lea Army

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

THERE'S a little house out here on Constance Street that I can get—a little green house, four rooms to it an' a patch 'of ground in the back where I could grow cabbages an' things. An' there'd be a couple of rosebushes an' a fern basket in front for you. Aw, come on, Mattie—why not? What's the matter with you? You love me, don't you?" The man's voice grew suddenly sharply questioning. "You ain't thinkin' of that Tom Callan—that contractor guy? He's makin' money, I hear. I can't think it of you, Mattie—after two years. But your holdin' back this way— You say you're lovin' me——"

"Of course I'm lovin' you, Joe." She laid one hand, roughened from hot water and kitchen soap, on his arm in quick protest. "It ain't that. But I'm scared, Joe—scared of bein' poor.",

"Poor! You won't be any poorer than you are here at home, than you have been all your life—not as poor. Your pa makes his sixty-five dollars up here at the mill, an' I make mine out on the levee—an' it'd 'a' been more but for this war comin' on an' cuttin' wages."

"I know—I know what 'tis, Joe. An' I ain't scared for now. I guess if I hadn't seen what I have of bein' poor, I wouldn't be scared at all. But pa

came home drunk. He lost his job to-day. I guess that set me off."

She folded her arms for warmth in the thin, red cotton sweater she wore, and shifted her weight from one foot to the other with a swaying of her slender body that was calculated to set her blood in motion, and the man leaned back against a convenient fence rail and eyed her moodily. The radiance from the arc light above their heads whitened the oval of her face, so that her eyes showed blacker, her lips a more vivid crimson, by contrast, and the loose wave of her dark hair across her forehead was a thing of allurements. She pushed it up with the back of one hand while she talked, but it fell again into the same place.

"That's why I came out here on the corner, instead of askin' you in. Ma's havin' a time with him. This is the third job he's lost this winter 'count of the war. It's certainly fierce on us poor people. An' bein' poor is fierce all the time! 'Tisn't just workin' hard an' not havin' a lot of things you want—I guess I could stand that—but it's the fussin' an' fightin' an' gettin' drunk—that's what bein' poor means. I've seen it all my life, an' I—I don't want to go on seein' it if I can help." Her voice softened to silence, but she broke forth tempestuously again before he

could speak: "As long as there's money in the house—enough for rent an' groceries—everything's all right, but when the money isn't there—look out!" She grew hysterical with the rush of words.

"Well—'n' if all that is so? Ain't I told you I was gettin' a raise soon as times was good—"

"Pa's been goin' to get a raise soon as times was good ever since I can remember, Joe, but times ain't ever good for poor people—looks like." A tear glistened on her cheek, and her lips trembled threateningly.

"Aw, Mattie!" begged the man. "What you gettin' the weeps erbout? I can take care of you. I ain't the drinkin' kind—nor the fightin'—with you. An' you got it wrong that it's bein' poor brings them things." He caught her hand in his and held it clumsily in an attempt at comforting. "Aw, come on, Mattie—lemme get that little house. It's got the furniture in it already what we need, an' it'll be some little home for just you an' me." His voice softened, then grew husky with pleading, and the girl leaned toward him even while she shook her head.

"I'm scared, Joe," she repeated; "scared of bein' poor. People with money don't have troubles like poor people." Feeling his fingers loosening their hold, she clutched at them. "Oh, but I'm scared of lettin' you go, too, Joe—scared I can't be happy without you. An' I do want to be happy. Oh, I don't know what to do!"

"Well, I'll tell you, baby." In the face of her indecision, he spoke almost roughly. "You've gone an' got yourself all mixed up on this rich an' poor business an' what'll make you happy. You gotter find out. I can't go on hangin' round like this." His voice was uneven with tenderness and determination. "Don't do you any good nor me neither, with Tom Callan jus' waitin' for me to slip up. So we gotter wind

things up. Ain't I right?" She nodded dumbly. "Well, you think it over to-morrow. All day you can study on it, an' when I come by in the evenin', you have your mind made up." The force of his stronger will behind the simple words comforted her strangely. "But you listen here. I'm tellin' you—'tain't bein' rich makes people happy. Why, me 'n' you in that little ol' green house on Constance Street—with your rose-bushes an' my cabbages—you waitin' on the steps for me in the evenin' when I come home tired"—he sang the old song with the eternal crooning spontaneity that each new voice lends to it—"why, Mattie, me 'n' you'd be happy as any of them ginks on the avenue."

They walked back to the house as he talked, openly holding hands in the dusk. A neighbor woman, pausing in her doorway, eyed them contemplatively, and a small boy on one roller skate fled past them, finding time between spurts to shrill derisively at a familiar sight.

"I ain't askin' you to come in," she said.

"No, I gotter beat it, anyhow. I'll be here all right to-morrow evenin'—same time, I guess. By bye. An' you stop them weeps, you hear!"

She watched him go with eyes that misted in spite of her, but her lips faltered to a smile as she laid her hand on the door and went in.

She woke to her problem in the morning, with a very hopeless feeling that grew upon her as the hours passed. Her father ate his breakfast in hang-dog fashion, without lifting his eyes from his plate, and her mother went about her endless tasks with weary, reddened eyelids. Mattie saw the nightmare of unhappiness merge with poverty as she took her place before a sink full of greasy dishes. When the second supply of these had been attended to after the noon dinner, her

mother turned from the doorway of an inner room and spoke listlessly.

"The skirts o' Mis' Willis', Mattie," she said, "is all done up in a bundle layin' on the machine. I want you to take 'em over to her. Two dollars is what she owes me for 'em. The big house on the avenue where you went before. Don't you wait too long before you go."

With a haste that savored of flight, Mattie finished her work and gathered her jacket and hat and the bundle from the other room. She went out, shutting the door behind her as forcibly as the sagging knob permitted. Her head ached a bit from the thoughts that beat so mercilessly within her brain, and the cold air was like a tonic. Gradually, as she walked, these thoughts strung themselves into the semblance of a prayer, a chant that swelled with the rhythm of her steps on the asphalt: "Oh, God—please help me to see! If I only knew for sure! It



"That's why I came out here on the corner, instead of askin' you in."

don't seem as if I could ever be unhappy with Joe—but poor people do have a lot of trouble. Rich people don't have trouble like that, seems to me. I want to be happy an' I'm scared to marry a poor man. Please help me to decide! Please give me some sign!"

She prayed it rather more incoherently than that, the phrases broken across by the struggle with weak tears,



"To see you like that," she cried, "there on the floor—the shame of it! It's too horrible!"

the effort to keep her lips steady and smiling when old Mrs. Dunken called good morning and peered inquisitively at her over the rim of her tarnished spectacles; but the whole of it was just that, and the two thoughts that surged upward oftenest were: "I want to be happy," and "Rich people don't have trouble like us." Back of those thoughts hung the amorous whisper of Tom Callan's voice and the certain wealth he was piling up for himself. If Joe only had money like that!

Mattie, who was seventeen and pretty, with the prettiness of bright eyes and a clear skin and even white teeth, who had never been sick a day in her life, was not given to envy. A healthy pang of it might now and then beset her at sight of a curling pink

plume on a black velvet hat, or a set of white furs framing a girl's glowing face, or a long-stemmed, crimson rose pinned carelessly on another's dress, but this sullen, aching envy was new to her. Down the length of the street she fought it with thoughts of Joe—the remembered thrill of his hand over hers, the husky, pleading inflections of his voice, the picture he had drawn of the little green house on Constance Street, with its cabbage patch in the back yard. Mattie laughed a bit shakily to herself. There was something in that recollection—the idea of Joe, born and raised in the city, longing for a cabbage patch of his own—that woke all the mothering tenderness within her.

With the light of that tenderness in

her eyes, she turned from the sidewalk and struck off across the park, following the footpath that skirted the polo field and the golf links. Two gray-twigged cassine bushes marked the beginning of the path, and the berries clustering thick along the branches were a vivid, cheerful crimson; but when she had passed those, the January wind whipped at her relentlessly out of a leaden sky and across russet-tinged stretches of level field. It was cold around her ankles, cold on her ungloved hands, which grew red under the sting, cold against her face, so that her eyes smarted and lost their tender light from sheer physical discomfort. The cold sent a piercing, nerve-racking pain up the side of her nose, and the world was a miserable, unhappy place in consequence.

That walk across the park seemed many times its length, and when she finally set foot upon the avenue, the feeling that had been dread and envy had grown into a throbbing hurt of dissatisfaction and recklessness. She wasn't going to think about Joe. She knew what she wanted, and it was money—money that would take her out of the reach of discomfort and unhappiness. Sure of this now, Mattie went on to the big house on the avenue.

It was the house that of all those on the avenue she most admired. A great pile of red brick built in imitation of some English place, it stood well back from the street. Twin magnolia trees, dark and impressive, grew on each side of the iron gate, and from the foot of the wide white marble steps that mounted the terrace twin lions of white stone snarled impartially at the passers-by. On sunny days a gorgeous crimson-and-blue-and-orange parrakeet, with tail feathers a yard long, screamed from his stand upon the gallery, and at any moment a tawny-coated pair of collies were apt to come frolicking around the side of the house. It was

a place just like those in stories, Mattie thought, and the people who lived there must be like people in stories, too. That was what having money could do for you—it could make you like people in stories, it could lift you out of the way of such ugly things as quarreling and drunkenness and shame. For the first time in her life, Mattie was aware of the festering, unanswerable questions the socialist propounds: Why had some people so much money and others so little? Why must her father and Joe be always asking for work, while other men, like Tom Callan, were able to give or to refuse it? Why must she and her mother be objects of pity and gossip? Why must they do the work and bear the shame and unhappiness while these other people simply lived to enjoy themselves? Why—why—why?

She opened the gate and went around to the side entrance, the full curve of her red lips twisted with mutinous thoughts. The pretty mulatto girl who answered her ring held her head haughtily under the frill of her maid's cap. She directed Mattie in condescending tones, while her languishing glances coquetted with the yard boy, who moved, whistling, across the driveway.

"Mis' Willis's skirts from the dress-maker? Just take them upstairs to her room. Up those stairs and along the hall to the front room."

The cool insolence of her voice brought the blood to Mattie's cheeks, but she mounted the stairs in silence. Another morning she would have rejoiced in her surroundings, regardless of such details as insolent maids. Through an open door she caught a glimpse of the dining room, dark with oak and glistening with polished surfaces and mirrors that held the glint of silver and crystal. A bowl of pale blush roses on the table sent forth a faint sweetness that drifted out and up to her. At the landing she paused

for an instant, her eyes on the window seat before her—the soft heap of blue and crimson cushions, the fern hanging in the window, the wide-armed wicker chair with the magazine lying open on the arm as if some one had but that moment dropped it. It wasn't fair! These people had everything beautiful, everything to make them happy, nothing to quarrel about. Probably they'd never seen a drunken man in their lives.

The last thought was a resentful explosion of the primal cause of Mattie's own unhappiness. Shifting the weight of the package under her arm, she went down the hall. On each side of her the waxed floor gleamed from a recent polishing, but the thick carpet under her feet deadened the sound of her steps. The door of the front room stood open a bit, and she knocked softly on it. There was no answer, but from somewhere behind one of a half dozen closed doors came the sound of voices, and the instant that she heard them Mattie wondered. They were curiously broken, angry voices to be heard in the house of happy people—they sounded as if some one, a woman, were scolding and crying at some one else whose voice was very indistinct.

Mattie hesitated uncertainly before she knocked again. This time she thought she heard an answering "Come," and she pushed the door open and went in very quietly. The room was empty. She stood still, and looked around her in surprise. There was admiration, of course, for the pale, thick rugs on the floor and the white walls and furniture, the lacy coverings of the bed and the array of silver things on the triple-mirrored dressing table, but before even this there was surprise. The voice that had answered her had been very plain.

The sound of voices broke forth again, and now she saw that the door between this and the next room was

open, and the voices came from the next room. In another instant her eyes caught the reflection in a long, narrow mirror opposite the open door, and she stopped in the very act of retreat. Her eyes grew wide and dark, and her mutinous mouth rounded in astonishment.

A man sat on the edge of the bed in the other room, his figure slouched over against the foot rail with a slackness Mattie could not fail to recognize. His coat and hat lay beside him on the floor, and his hair stood upright on his head in wet tufts, as if he had that moment lifted it from a basin of water. His round, red face was ludicrously solemn, and his eyes stared intently straight ahead of him with a lack of expression that could mean only one thing. The lines of his mouth sagged weakly in fatuous amiability.

A drunken man! And among these happy people who had all the money to save them from such troubles! In the moment in which Mattie recognized him, having seen him on various occasions coming out of the front door, getting into his limousine, strolling on the avenue—always with the air and sobriety of the hero of a best seller—he spoke, his words lapping one another when they were not separated by nerve-racking pauses.

"Well, 'n, have it your way!" he said to whoever else was in the room with him, and he waved one hand in gracious dismissal or argument. "If 't pleases you—to—think—I'm drunk—why—have—it—your—way—I'm drunk!"

He settled the matter courteously, to waive dispute, and the expression on his face was unmistakably virtuous. He closed his eyes slowly and with evident pleasure, then opened them quite suddenly to their fullest extent of vacant blue.

"Drunk!" said the other voice, one that seemed meant only for laughter and soft words. "Drunk like any beast from the Irish Channel! So drunk



The way in which she ignored the thought of all this girl must have heard was superb.

your friend Mr. Carter had to bring you home. You can't even stand up—you don't know what you're saying—you can't even realize now that every servant on the place is laughing at you! And the men at the club—Or are they all beasts, too? Oh!—the voice broke into hysterical sobs—"and you had promised me—you promised New Year's Day—that you'd never touch the stuff again."

The sobs choked the words, and for a minute there was only the heart-tearing sound of a woman crying against her will. The man on the bed put one unsteady hand on the rail and attempted to rise, the other hand outstretched to soothe.

"There—there—my dear!" he said. "You don't seem to understand."

These—little—social amenities gotter be—gotter be—just *gotter be*; tha's all!" He made one shuffling step beyond the mirror's horizon.

"Don't touch me!" cried the woman sharply. There was a sound of an overturned chair or table, then a fall; that sound deadened apparently by a rug. The woman shrieked softly.

"To see you like that," she cried, "there on the floor—the shame of it! It's too horrible! Oh, I wish we hadn't a cent in the world! There'd be no 'social amenities' for you then. If you hadn't the price of a high ball, maybe you'd be a man! It's money that does it—money—money—Oh, my God—why aren't we poor—and happy?"

Warned by some tardy instinct, she came suddenly across the space of the

inner room and stopped on the threshold, her eyes dilating at sight of Mattie, the mad words still upon her lips, frozen there the next instant by a miracle of repression and control. Mattie, in her scant little black serge suit and sailor hat, fumbled nervously with the button of her jacket and felt her bundle slipping from her fingers. It was not only the sight of the woman in the other doorway, in her creamy silken negligee, her great dark eyes wet with the passion that flushed her cheeks and marred them with tears at one and the same time; but the words she had said rang deafeningly in the air of the two rooms: "It's money that does it. Oh, my God—why aren't we poor and happy?"

"Well—what is it?" The woman said the words almost coolly as she closed the door of the other room and came forward, but a tiny line of red showed where her teeth held firm on her lower lip. The way in which she ignored the thought of all this girl must have heard was superb. She took the skirts and laid them on the bed, took the money for them from a silver purse on the dresser, and handed it to Mattie. And if her fingers, when they touched the girl's, were icy—why, so were the girl's.

"The maid sent you up?" she asked steadily, and Mattie nodded. Oddly enough, it was Mattie who flushed, as if the other woman's shame had been hers, and she stumbled out of the room and closed the door quickly behind her. It shut the other woman in with her silks and laces and glittering silver, which somehow, by their very beauty, made the shame and unhappiness so much more poignant. But the light of a revelation went with Mattie.

Down the hall and stairs and out of the house she fled, with never a glance

at the evidences of the wealth that had fed her envy fifteen minutes before. The mulatto girl was coquetting with the yard boy on the steps, and the colliers were basking in the pale sunlight. The parrakeet scolded noisily at her as she closed the gate, and the stone lions snarled ferociously had she stopped to look. But she didn't stop. She drew a long, quivering breath when the gate clicked to behind her, and she gazed down at the coins in her hand with a mixture of fear and question and awe.

"Gee!" she said, and again more softly: "Gee!" She added after a moment, in the light of the revelation: "Well, they're not happy if they have got money. She wishes she was poor!" With a little quivering laugh, she lifted her cheek to the sting of the wind. "So if it isn't money that makes people happy, I wonder what it is?"

Thought of a little green house on Constance Street teased the corners of her mouth to a conscious smile, and she brushed the riddle of the Sphinx aside with a mysteriously awakened confidence and pride.

"I'll ask Joe," she said.

With the swinging step of health and youth, she went on. The wind was at her back now and sped her on her way.

"I'd have a honeysuckle along the fence," she planned. "It's so sweet nighttimes in summer. And a Marie rose on the front of the house. They just bloom and bloom." A ghost of her knowledge of poverty rose waveringly to confront her, but the sudden revelation of unhappiness in the midst of luxury flamed like a beacon on the other hand, and between the two she made her choice as a homing bird seeks its nest.

"I guess Joe'll take care of me all right," she said.



A Pair of Pink Shoes

By Frances Harmer

A LITTLE breeze began it all—a spitefully playful, spring-filled zephyr. For he stirred Cop's young blood with desire for life and movement, so that the youth was fain to neglect his work and read of wild adventures in the far Pacific. (Why do dime novelists always ignore the Atlantic?) And then he—Mr. Breeze—blew aside the address slips.

"Cop!"

Slowly the fair and far Pacific was displaced by the exterior of Crofton's—that imposing downtown shoe store, in which Cop swept, and from which he carried footgear.

"Yes, sir!"

The word was the mechanical word of custom—the tone was calm. How was that frowning head clerk to know that, in soul, Cop was glaring at him, as Dick the Doughty Dare-devil glared at the pirate captain?

"Now, Cop, no more mistakes. Stick on these labels here, just as I have placed them—and then see that you get them delivered before six."

"Yes, sir."

Then the breeze came along and displaced the labels. Cop picked them up from the floor, with a hurried glance in the direction of the pi-head clerk. Next he seized the mucilage brush and firmly affixed the labels—on the wrong boxes.

The shoes had been bought after the departure of the smart wagon on its last round. Cop boarded a car. His shock of red hair, his wide blue eyes, his mouth, revealing dazzling teeth, his lavish display of freckles—these were not unknown to the conductor who let him stand on the back platform, un-reproved. Cop was enjoying the fresh spring air.

He went first to Fifty-eighth Street. Here he left a box addressed to "Miss Mary Norcross," and containing elegant evening pumps for a gentleman who wore number nines.

Next he sought One Hundred and Fourteenth-Street. Here he deposited a small box which enshrined a dainty pair of pink satin threes.

Then, sustained by a sense of duty done, he took the elevated downtown and sought the shelter of his cheap boarding house and its cheap supper. Then—having, alas! never a ticket for any show—he buried himself in the light literature by whose aid he saw himself, Copernicus Erasmus Jones—a hero—either by far-distant shores or on wide, treeless plains, the gallant rescuer of damsels in distress, the feared of every pirate captain and robber chief, the beloved of all his friends.

But to return to the shoes.

Mr. Arthur Heaton, a large-souled—and heeled—young man, returned to

his hall bedroom in One Hundred and Fourteenth Street as quickly as he could after escaping from the art store in which he assisted. Two boxes were on his bed. He tore open the first with nervous haste.

"It'll do," he murmured thankfully as he tried on the Tuxedo-it contained. "I don't feel quite the fool I suppose I should in swallow tails. It was a chance, meeting old Dickson and getting asked to his wife's reception. Now I get the benefit of what my father did for his."

Yet he knew that, glad as he was to go to the reception, he would be gladder still to come away.

"If I knew one girl—just one young lady!" he said in his heart as he laid the coat carefully upon the bed. "It must be grand to go to a swell thing like this and know that half a dozen girls are just longing for you to look their way."

Mr. Heaton was young.

"I'll try on the pumps after dinner," was his next reflection as he finished shaving.

He made but a poor pretense of dining, and hurried back to his toilet. Those of the boarders who had lingered in the hall heard a wild cry.

The next moment Mr. Heaton, in his shirt sleeves, and holding in his left hand a small, pink satin shoe, rushed madly to the telephone. His fellow boarders gathered round him, keenly enjoying the situation.

"Can't get them? Nonsense! What—the store's closed? Wait a bit."

Central shut off.

"Must have a residence phone," said Mr. Heaton, seizing the telephone book.

His fair, boyish face was deeply flushed. His subconscious self was saying: "Be calm," to his conscious self, which read over the "C's" in the telephone directory.

"Give me 8724 River. Hello—hello! This Mr. Crofton? Well, you've sent

me the wrong shoes. Pink. Mine were black patent-leather pumps. And these are threes, and I— What? You know nothing about it—ask head clerk? What's his number? What? You can't tell? His name, then? You must know his name? Oh, Woodward. Thanks."

This time he shut central off and lost himself in the telephone book.

"Say—you head clerk at Crofton's? Yes, I recognize your voice. Well, your messenger has given me the wrong shoes. Lady's—and pink. Well, what the—I mean, what're you going to do about it? The boy? What good can he do? Oh, get the pumps, will he? Tell him to be quick, will you? Good-by."

Ignoring the boarders, though his face was pinker than the shoe he picked up and carried to his room, he waited impatiently for an eternity. At the end of the eternity, Cop came.

"You young scoundrel!" was Mr. Heaton's cordial greeting. "Where are my pumps?"

"Guess they ain't far off," replied Cop sulkily.

He had left a damsel bound to a tree and surrounded by naked savages, some thousand in number. She was quite unaware that the hero, but fifty miles off, was coming to her on the back of the fleetest ostrich known, and that he would, when he came, make mincemeat of all those savages. Pumps—and those who wore them—seemed very tame to Cop just then.

"I guess I took 'em to Fifty-eighth Street."

"Then go and get 'em back," cried Mr. Heaton. But he looked at his watch. It was eight o'clock. He was bidden for nine.

"And I don't want to go in late and make a commotion and have 'em all staring at me," thought Mr. Heaton. You see, it was his first reception.

"I'll go with you, and we'll take these,

and—and I'll have to go into a saloon, I suppose, to put the others on," he said. "Come on—there isn't a minute to lose."

They took the L. But access to the mansion in Fifty-eighth Street was not easy. A colored butler, with the manners of Tiberius Cæsar, guarded the portal. He regarded Mr. Heaton and his young friend with marked disfavor.

"Yo' look 'spectable," he admitted at last to Heaton as the April breeze, flapping that young man's light overcoat, revealed his Tuxedo, "though you nevah can *tell*. But yo' send *him* down those steps."

Until this was done, and Cop glared at them both from the sidewalk, Mr. Heaton could make nothing of the butler. Even then he didn't make much. For, after his gasping explanation, he was horrified to hear the butler say to an irascible and portly old gentleman who suddenly appeared in the hall:

"Young man to sell ladies' slippahs, sah!"

Mr. Heaton was by nature modest and a little timid, but this was too much even for him.

"I am nothing of the sort," he shouted. "There's been a mistake, and I want to set it right. A pair of pumps——"

"Oh, you're from Crofton's," said the old gentleman. "Molly, my dear!" He raised his voice. "Here is Crofton's young man about your shoes."

There flashed from an open door such a vision as Mr. Heaton had heretofore beheld only under glass cases. She was young, she was fair. Her eyes and hair were dark; her face was like a rose. She appeared to Mr. Heaton as if she had hastily donned a few sunset clouds and then stood under a shower bath of nonperishable dewdrops.

"Oh, my shoes!" she cried joyfully. "Pompey, give him the others."

The butler turned away. The old gentleman was about to make his own

exit through another door when Mr. Heaton's voice arrested him.

"I—I am not from Crofton's," he stammered.

It was nearing nine. Time pressed. The part of wisdom would surely have been to have handed in the pink shoes, snatched at the pumps, and bolted to a saloon. But wisdom and Mr. Heaton were then far, far apart. Not Pallas, but Aphrodite, ruled the hour. Let that divine creature take him for "Crofton's young man"? Ye gods, no!

"Hi, there, stop!" cried the old gentleman testily as Pompey reappeared with Crofton's largest box. "If he's not from Crofton's, my dear, there's some mistake, and he mustn't take those away."

"They are no good to me," pouted Miss Molly. "But where are mine?"

Mr. Heaton sprang to the door, and Cop tumbled in, much in the manner of Miss Sophie Fulgarney, in the third act of the "Gay Lord Quex."

Mr. Heaton snatched the box from his hands and offered it to Miss Molly. She, opening it, uttered a cry of joy.

"Oh, that's all right! I'm so glad they have come."

"You tell Crofton's to send their regular van for the pumps to-morrow," commanded the old gentleman. "Show them out, Pompey."

"But—but—oh, you don't understand," cried Mr. Heaton in despair. "The pumps are mine. I'm a customer at Crofton's. I bought those pumps——"

He stopped in despair. He caught a grin on Pompey's sable cheek.

Cop now intervened.

"He's givin' ye straight goods," he said, addressing the old gentleman. "De pumps is his. I guess I just made a wrong delivery dis afternoon—dat's all."

"All!" cried the old gentleman. "The whole thing seems very fishy to me. Molly, those pumps stay here. And in

the morning let some one phone to Crofton's."

Miss Molly, always successfully besieged by beggars, looked distressed. She turned from her father to Cop, from Cop to Mr. Heaton. Her eyes fell, and the rose on her cheek deepened.

"But, daddy, dear," she said, "I'm sure it's all right. This nice boy says he made the mistake——"

"He should be dismissed," growled her father.

"——and this gentleman has kindly brought me my shoes," she went on. "It's all right. Pompey, give the gentleman that box."

Pompey, well knowing who was the real head of the house, promptly obeyed. Miss Molly smiled divinely, made a sign to Pompey that caused him somewhat reluctantly to hand a dime to Cop, and—a closed door intervened between the vision and Mr. Heaton's dazzled eyes. Grasping his pumps, he withdrew into the cold and empty outer world.

In less than an hour from that moment, having made his trembling bow to a rather frigid hostess, Mr. Heaton,

a lone castaway upon a sea of strangers, heard a note of music sweeter than Apollo's flute.

"Oh!" That was all.

He turned. There, beside him, stood Miss Molly—and she smiled on him.

The head clerk at Crofton's was exceedingly puzzled by two telephone messages early the next day.

He had sent Cop, sulky and alarmed, from his presence. His evening had been disturbed.

"This Crofton's? Well, it didn't matter about that mistake last night. And the boy did his best. I shouldn't like him to get into any trouble about it. Thank you. Good-by."

The head clerk hung up the receiver, only to take it down again.

"This Crofton's? Well, it's all right about those pumps. The boy behaved very well, and took a lot of trouble. I hope he doesn't lose his job. He was very intelligent. That's all right. Good-by."

"You see it doesn't happen again," said the manager as he gave Cop another message. "You've got off well this time."



The Last Butterfly

HE rocks upon the autumn blooms
In tiger-colored, splendid vest,
Unwitting that along the west,
Purple and black, his fate cloud looms.

To-morrow when the clamorous sky
Has sent its ache of sudden cold,
Among the poplars' littered gold
His ribbed and tawny wings shall lie.

A little, useless life! And still
Some child, some woman weak and low,
Will miss him, that he fails to show
His idle velvet on her sill!

RHEEM DOUGLAS.

The Abandoned Trunk

By Marguerite Putnam Bush

Author of "Submissive Sylvia," "Barbara's Father," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

UNDER ordinary circumstances, the trunk would have been considered merely a trunk, unworthy of a second glance. But keyless, nameless, abandoned, it seemed a mysterious, alien thing in the attic of the Widow Tuttle's boarding house, in Sohoville, whither it had been borne five weeks ago to await the return of its owner.

It was locked! This brought confusion to the soul of Min Tuttle, the landlady's young daughter; and when the nonreturn of its owner became an accepted fact, she began to urge her mother to force open the trunk. But locked it remained till one September morning, when her arguments prevailed.

The final discussion took place at the breakfast table. At the time, the mother and daughter were alone in the house, owing to a new rule of the establishment that it should be free from "guests" during September. And now that the ears were removed from the boarding-house walls, Min felt free to put forth a strong argument in favor of the opening of the trunk.

"It's five weeks since Miss Tremaine left us without any warning or paying a cent she owed us," she said wrathfully and with a fierce shake of her head that set her red curls atremble. "It makes me biting mad when I think of the way I lugged up her breakfast trays all those months she was here, and she in bed, the lazy thing! What

have we got in return for the expense and bother? *A locked trunk!* I tell you what, I'm going up to open it this minute!"

She was quick of action. Her body was as lithe and fleshless as a wire rod. She ran from the room, possessed herself of necessary tools, and flew up to the attic, a flight of stairs in advance of her mother. Her strong young hands forced the lock with slight difficulty, lifted the cover, and swooped down on the trunk's contents with the rapacity of hungry hawks. Suddenly treasures were revealed.

Trembling with excitement, Min began to draw forth dresses of fabrics and of a fashion as foreign to anything in her own wardrobe as the draperies of celestial beings. And, after the dresses, underwear! Pale pinks and lavenders, delicate as the sea foam that enveloped the rising Venus—and quite as transparent. Then shoes! Daughters of the Castles, what shoes! Poised airily on slender heels, their pointed, satin toes gleaming with jewels! They almost danced of themselves.

Min kicked off her brown pumps and stepped into a pair of silver evening slippers. Magic slippers! Her feet slid over the rough boards as lightly as glancing sunbeams.

Mrs. Tuttle looked up from the trunk. She was kneeling before it, examining its contents with a calculating eye.

"How you do act, Min! Don't soil those shoes, child, and what *are* you do-



"What are you doing with that dress? You'll tear it, sure's I live!"

ing with that dress? You'll tear it, sure's I live!"

Min had divested herself of her own commonplace garments, and was exploring the inner mysteries of a dancing frock. Slowly her auburn head emerged from the silver-green gauze; white neck and gleaming shoulders followed. The girl then threw herself into a pose copied from the fashion page of a recent Sunday paper, and challenged her mother's admiration.

"You do look cute, Min," said Mrs. Tuttle, "but—"

"Smart," corrected Min sharply. "That's what the swells say, Miss Tremaine told me."

"Well, smart, then. But take that dress off, and be awful careful, too. I guess we can get enough for these things to make up part of our loss."

Min's brown eyes flared. Swiftly she inserted her lean body between the kneeling woman and the trunk.

"Listen, mother! I'm not going to let you sell one thing in that trunk. I'm going to keep every blessed thing to wear myself."

Mrs. Tuttle sat back on her heels, dumfounded, and stared at her daughter. At length a gleam of understanding animated her blank face. She beamed on Min, and raised her hands. The girl gripped the plump little paws with iron fingers and pulled her mother to her feet.

"I know," breathed Mrs. Tuttle ecstatically. "You've decided to marry Ned Holmes."

"Well, not much! When I pick a husband, I'll pick a gentleman."

"You can't. The variety don't grow in your garden," called a deep, laughing voice from the hall below.

The intrusion was so unexpected as to startle the mother and daughter into a granite silence.

Presently, "Eavesdropper!" denounced Min wrathfully. "You're not wanted up here; is he, mother?"

"N-not if you're smoking, Ned. I don't let any one smoke up attic. I'm dretful afraid of fire."

"Well, if I ain't a gentleman, I guess I can sacrifice five cents to the ladies," was the gallant reply, and then was heard a heavy tread on the stairs.

Min scurried across the floor and reached the attic door just in time to hold Ned Holmes at bay on the first landing. He was a big, muscular, brown-faced fellow, with a wide mouth, quick to smile, and large, gray eyes, usually animated by a spirit of fun. A purposeful jaw tipped the scales that weighed his character to the side of strength.

The sight of Min in her finery seemed to petrify him.

"Holy smoke!" he finally ejaculated. "Where'd you jayhawk the dress?"

She glared down into his wonder-struck eyes. Their expression irritated her temper, which of late had not been pacific.

"That's no concern of yours."

"Well, ain't it? We're still engaged, as far as I know, and I ain't going to sit still and let you walk into trouble. I'm taking a late train in to New York this morning on purpose to come over here to tell you what I've decided you'd better do with Miss Tremaine's trunk. I——"

"Ned Holmes, you're a regular human wedge!" interrupted Min saucily.

The man turned away from the scornful face, and addressed the mother.

"See here, Mrs. Tuttle, that English woman did a lot more harm here than cheating you out of her board. She's Burbanked a regular pippin into a lemon. Min hasn't been herself for six months. She put all kinds of fool notions into her head about her looks. Good Lord, if she was half as pretty as that woman made her think she is, all the tailors in Sohoville would have to sit up nights pressing the bag out of

their customers' pants." He grinned. "But worse yet," he continued quickly, apprehending an interruption from Min, "she stuffed her full of stories about the New York swells, till she's got a hunch to join the four hundred. Better try for the 'ninety and nine," he advised, with a wink. "It's a safer herd."

Min, unable longer to hold her temper in leash, raised her hand, grasped the door, and slammed it in her lover's face. When the sound of retreating footsteps told her that he was steering his course downstairs, "I pray to goodness that's the end of Ned Holmes!" she cried angrily.

"Oh, Min!" ventured Mrs. Tuttle. "How can you treat that nice young man so?"

"Because he's been so bossy ever since Miss Tremaine began to take an interest in me. He's tried to turn me against her, and said she was just flattering me, so's we wouldn't press her for board. He acts as if I hadn't any mind of my own. I know what I want to do, and I'm not going to ask his advice, either."

"What is it you want to do?" asked her mother soothingly.

Min raised eyes tear-starred yet defiant.

"I want to get away from this life. Miss Tremaine said you might as well take poison as boarders, so far as getting in with the swells goes. And she said, what with my high-school education and my beauty, it was a crime for me to run a New Jersey boarding house. She said if I'd leave it, I might rise to any position—that lots of women in the smart set came originally from a lower class than we do. She said that five years ago Mrs. Alfred Godwin-Godwin was herding cattle on a ranch out West; and look at her now! The greatest swell in New York. Of course, I knew I couldn't do anything without clothes, and these things have come to

me straight from Providence, I truly believe."

"What is it you propose to do, Min?" asked her mother anxiously.

"Instead of going off for a month to Greenwood Lake, I mean to take the money and go to Lenox for a week."

Mrs. Tuttle gasped.

"Lenox?"

"*Lenox!*" snippily corrected Min. "That's the smartest place now. Smarter'n Newport, even. And who knows, mother, what a week in that big hotel, dressed up in these dandy clothes, would do for me?"

"Don't be cross, Min, if I quote Ned, but the other day he says, 'You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.'"

"Guess you can make *near*-silk, and that'll do in these days. It's the fashion to be false. Miss Tremaine says everything about the swells is false—lace, jewelry, hair, complexion. She said she didn't own a genuine thing herself. Look at this necklace, will you? Isn't it just as pretty as if it was real?"

The necklace she held up for exhibition was composed of ten jeweled medallions, identical in size and design. They were joined by tiny links. From a central point depended a medallion larger than the others, and further distinguished by an empty setting on its oval face.

"That is a pretty combination, those green stones and the rhinestones," exclaimed Mrs. Tuttle. "Turn round, and I'll clasp it on for you."

"I'm going down to look at myself in the big mirror in Miss Tremaine's room. I'm just crazy to see myself dressed like a real swell. You go along first, mother, and pull down the shades, so's the neighbors can't see in."

The room reached, Min pranced up and down before the mirror, arching her neck and twisting her head. Finally: "This necklace gives me a real princess air. I do look as if I'd been born to the purple, as Miss Tremaine

said," she declared. Then, suddenly facing her mother, "You've got to promise me not to tell Ned Holmes anything about my Lenox plan," she said.

"Why——"

"Now, promise, mother. I know. You were going to ask his advice, and I want to get away without him or any of the neighbors gossiping about it. I'm going to repack these things in my own trunk, so's not to give 'em a chance to wonder about the strange trunk."

"Guess I'd better pack my things in a wastebasket," said Mrs. Tuttle facetiously.

A cloud of embarrassment settled over Min's face.

"I—I didn't suppose you'd want to go. I meant to go alone."

"Alone! Min Jobson Tuttle! Do you think I'm crazy? With girls not half as pretty as you getting kidnaped all the time? *No!* If you're set on going to Lenox, I'm going with you."

The travelers left Sohoville for the Berkshires at noon the following day. The difference in their costumes was so great as to provoke a comment from Mrs. Tuttle:

"Guess the hotel folks'll take me for your servant, Min. And I must say you look awful conspicuous."

"You think so because you aren't used to seeing any smartly dressed people," said Min loftily. "And, look here, I want you to call me 'Minna' while we're away. 'Min's' so common!"

She attracted the attention of men of all ages on the way to the Grand Central Station; and, later, when she was seated in the Berkshire Pullman across the aisle from her mother, a man at the end of the car swung his chair quite around and stared at her over the top of his newspaper. He was a thin, lean-faced man, something under forty. His bearing was that of an aristocrat, she noted.

A self-conscious expression settled on her face; her dimples came and

went. Frequently that afternoon, she threw a glance his way. Each time she surprised him in the act of peering at her over his paper. At the journey's end, she discovered him by her side, on the Lenox platform, crowding close to her and openly staring at her.

That her mother had watched with alarm the little byplay, she was perfectly aware, and consequently she was not surprised to hear her whisper chidingly:

"Min, don't look at that saw-faced man again. It isn't safe. Ned cautioned me about such things last night. I met him at the post office, and we took a walk together. There, thank goodness! That starrer's gone off in an auto. I hope it's the last of him. I've been so worried, I haven't breathed below my collar bone since we left Soho-ville."

But it was not the last of him. While the two women were at dinner that evening, he suddenly appeared in the



The eyes of the two young women met.

room, adjusted a monocle, and stared at Min. A warm flush overspread her face; her lids drooped coyly. The man, however, after scrutinizing her with a cold, Cyclops' eye, passed beyond the Tuttles' table and joined a strikingly handsome girl who was sitting alone at a table near by.

"Well, thank goodness!" said Mrs. Tuttle.

"For what?" demanded the daughter sharply.

"That saw-faced man's married."

Min sent a cool glance over to the table occupied by the man and the girl. Soup had been placed before them, but it lay untouched. Evidently an all-absorbing subject was under discussion. The man, elbow on table, his sharp chin sunk in his hand, was leaning toward his companion and speaking in her ear. While the girl listened, she played with a cocktail glass at her place. Occasionally she raised it and sipped the liquor. She was a very unusual-looking creature. Her hair was amber colored; so was the light tan of her cheek; so were the eyes beneath straight black brows. Clearly a daughter of the winds and sun.

Undoubtedly she belonged to her companion's world of the coveted "four hundred," Min decided.

"Yes, I guess they are married," she said. "But she don't care a rap for him. Serves him right, too. They're quarreling. See? She won't look at him. I'm crazy to know who they are, and as soon's we're through dinner, I'm going to the office to ask the clerk."

At the end of the meal, she rose quickly, brushed by her mother, and contrived so to lead their course out of the dining room as to pass that special table. When she drew close to it, those amber eyes were suddenly lifted to her face in deep scrutiny. Dazed, she moved on so swiftly that Mrs. Tuttle could not keep pace with her. She reached the office in a tremor of excitement and interrupted a conversation between the clerk and a late arrival.

"Say, can you tell me who those swells are in the dining room—the tall, thin man and the handsome girl with yellow eyes?"

The clerk's hand shot up to his mouth.

"Not from your description," he said

chokingly. "Guess just dinner guests. Not stopping at the hotel."

The new arrival turned toward Min at this awkward moment with a courteous bow.

"Perhaps I can tell you," he said politely, and with a look of admiration in his deep-set dark eyes. "I know everybody in Lenox, by name, anyhow. Come out to the piazza with me, and on the way we'll look into the dining room and you can point them out, Miss —er—"

"Miss Tuttle, Mr. Paxton," introduced the clerk.

They walked away together, talking, and each looking furtively into the other's face.

Paxton had the slim, pliable figure of a dancing man, and he was carefully dressed and well groomed. He looked about twenty-five years old.

Suddenly he tapped Min's arm.

"Is that the girl you mean? She just came out of the dining room with a man who had a face so thin there wasn't anything to it but a profile."

"Yes, that's the girl."

"Great Scott, Miss Tuttle! She's as well known as the Queen of Diamonds. She's the Western ranch girl, the beautiful Mrs. Alfred Godwin-Godwin."

Min took an eager step forward to obtain a closer view of the famous beauty, the heroine of Miss Tremaine's "Tales of the Four Hundred."

Simultaneously, the amber girl turned to gather up her train. The eyes of the two young women met. The wistful wraith of a smile appeared on Mrs. Godwin-Godwin's lips, and her pale-gold head was inclined toward Min in an almost imperceptible bow. She was gone before the little suburbanite recovered her senses.

Glowing with excitement, Min turned to Mr. Paxton.

"Isn't she *the* handsomest thing ever you saw?"

"An hour ago, I'd have said 'yes,'" he whispered. "But now!"

He gave her an eloquent look. She blushed, and displayed her dimples.

The sudden creaking of heavy shoes on the veranda of noiseless ones, an agitated exclamation in her ear, brought Min down from her hastily-constructed air castle to Sohoville. Mrs. Tuttle, whose existence she had forgotten, seized her arm.

"Mi——"

"Minna," prompted her daughter, in a whisper.

"Well, Minna, then. You've scared me 'most to death, going off like this. I've been hunting all round for you. I want you to come in and go to——"

Min placed a firm hand on her mother's arm.

"This is my friend, Mr. Paxton," she said in stern tones.

The man bowed, and courteously pushed forward a chair. Mrs. Tuttle, frightened into silence, fairly tumbled into it.

"Oh, come, now!" he said pleadingly. "Please let your daughter go into the ballroom with me for an hour. Tomorrow night, they are going to give a big subscription dance, when every one will dance for prizes. I hope your daughter will be my partner, and we ought to get in some practice to-night."

"Can I go in there without I have on party clothes?" asked Min breathlessly.

"No; nor me, either," he answered, laughing. "But it won't take long to dress. I'll bet you I'm at the door waiting for you inside of fifteen minutes."

She was off on the instant. Laughing, she saw her mother's hand fly out and grab the air as she darted past her chair. Ten of the fifteen minutes had been consumed before Mrs. Tuttle joined her in their common bedroom.

"Say, mother," called Min, "fish that white fan out of the trunk, will you?

How do I look? Isn't this a peachy dress? I'm saving the silver-green gauze and the green necklace for the big dance to-morrow. I sent a description of the dresses and things to *Our Girls' Home Journal*, and asked them to tell me what to wear on each occasion. Wasn't I smart?"

"Min, I don't like these goings-on one mite," moaned Mrs. Tuttle, handing her the desired fan. "The way that saw-faced man in the cars was taken with you scared me to death. And now here's another man just——"

"Rubbish!" interrupted Min loftily. "This isn't Sohoville. Don't forget that."

She closed the door on the wailing response, and made the trysting place inside the given time. Her glance swept the ballroom and quickly distinguished Mrs. Godwin-Godwin among the dancers. The next moment, it fell on Paxton, approaching the appointed spot from an opposite door. She ran toward him and purposely crossed the dancing path of Mrs. Godwin.

"I've won!" she shouted.

The dancers, whom she had forced to a standstill, turned to stare at her, and for the second time the hazel eyes of the one lingered on her face.

Paxton smiled, and waved at her over the bobbing heads.

"How in the name of hooks and eyes did you do it?" he inquired, when he gained her side. Then, scanning her with flattering eyes, he whispered, "You're a looker, all right. Easily Queen of the Movies," laughing. "Come, let's join 'em!"

They danced away, in tune with each other apparently, but a trifle out of step and out of time to the music.

They parted at midnight. Min's feet, in the unyielding satin slippers, were hot and blistered, and her legs and back were aching from the undue strain put upon them. But the elation of her



A vigorous hand flew out and dealt Paxton's cheek a stinging blow that left it scarlet.

spirits raised her above the realm of suffering.

When she opened the bedroom door, the brilliancy within startled her. All the electric lamps were lighted, and Mrs. Tuttle was sitting upright in bed, her face as colorless as pipe clay.

Alarmed, Min hurried to the bedside. "What on earth's the matter? Nightmare?"

"Oh, Min, I don't know," said her mother, crying.

"Hush! You'll disturb people."

Mrs. Tuttle swallowed her sobs.

"After you left—I went right to bed, I was so tired. I heard a noise, and woke up suddenly. I saw a shadow near the trunk, and I thought you'd come in. So I says: 'Is that you, Min?' Then the shadow swished past the bed and out of the door quicker'n scat."

"Just indigestion," whispered Min, shaking with suppressed laughter.

"Do you think I was dreaming?" asked her mother nervously. "Look at the trunk, will you? I didn't all unpack, but I left things tidy."

Min yawned, kicked off the tight slippers, and hobbled over to the trunk. She gave a start.

"How'd you leave the trunk?" she asked.

"The lid shut and the tray inside."

The trunk was open, the top tray empty, and scattered over the floor were all the small things that go to make up a woman's wardrobe!

A quick examination of the trunk's contents and disgorgements showed Min none of her recent acquisitions missing. This disposed of the burglary theory. Her fears vanished. In another moment, she was laughing and making fun of her mother's "night scare."

"But just the same," she said in conclusion, "you ought to lock your door when you're at a hotel."

She turned out the lights and crept into bed. But she could not go to sleep. Her body still tingled where Paxton's arms had encircled it. Her ear held captive the tender tones of his voice, which harmonized with the strains of dance music.

Softly she repeated to herself the most treasured of his compliments.

"You're stunning in white. You sure are. Colors would spoil the gorgeous red of your hair," he had insisted, when she had told him she looked better in green.

Then again, "Lord," he had said, "how hideous most girls' necks are! All bones and strings, and burned to a cinder. But you have the neck of a snow queen. No beads or whitewash or black velvet girth for you."

In the darkness, Min smiled. She knew her beauty was enhanced by the silver-green color, and that her white neck looked still whiter when encircled by the necklace; and to-morrow night she intended that he should tell her so.

The following day they passed together, and, for the greater part, in the empty ballroom, as pupil and dancing master. She saw nothing of her mother till seven o'clock, when she went upstairs to dress for the evening. She found her then sitting motionless in a rocking-chair, hands clasped tightly together, and a brooding expression on her face.

"I'd give the world, Min," she said solemnly, "to see Ned Holmes walking into this room this minute. Wouldn't you?"

The girl elevated an impertinent chin and, without replying, turned to answer a sudden knock at the door.

A bell-boy handed her an envelope, sealed, and addressed to "Miss Tuttle" in unfamiliar handwriting. Her imagination took eagle flight. Doubtless an

invitation of some sort, secured for her by Mr. Paxton. She tore open the envelope. The note had neither a beginning nor an ending. It contained this brief line:

I beg you to remove the picture from the locket on the green necklace.

Mystery of mysteries! It read like an excerpt from one of Oppenheim's novels, and stirred her to quick fear.

So the pendant was a locket! Who could know that—or know that the green necklace was in her possession? But one person in the world, the owner, Miss Tremaine, their defaulting boarder! She must be in Lenox!

Min gave a quick intake of breath. The sheet of paper began to flutter in her fingers.

"Say," burst out Mrs. Tuttle, unable to restrain her curiosity longer, "who's your letter from? What does it say?"

Fortunately, Min was standing with her back to the rocking-chair. She returned the note to its envelope, which she thrust into her blouse.

"I thought we agreed some time ago that letters were private things," she said, turning with heightened color toward the indelicate catechizer.

"That was when you was first engaged to Ned," said Mrs. Tuttle in an injured tone of voice; then, lifting her eyes to Min's flushed face, "Oh, well, if it's one of Neddy's love letters!" she exclaimed, giving a complacent laugh.

Min waited till she saw the rocking-chair stirred to a gentle, soothing motion; then she went to the closet and took down the silver-green dress and laid it on the bed. She placed beside it stockings, slippers, gloves, handkerchief, and a fan. All the time, her mind was hard at work on the letter puzzle. What was its purport? Was the picture such a treasure as to make its loss a tragedy to Miss Tremaine? What if that compelling young woman should appear in the ballroom this even-

ing and make a scene? Min shook her head. No! Their absconding boarder would not dare show herself while an unpaid board bill of two hundred dollars was held against her. The letter was positive proof of that.

Min threw a furtive glance at the rocking-chair. Its weary occupant had lulled herself to sleep. She stepped softly to the bureau, opened a drawer, and presently disappeared into the dressing room with the necklace in her hand. She examined the pendant, discovered a spring, and touched it. A tiny photograph was revealed—a snapshot of a very young man who wore a big sombrero rakishly. He was laughing, and there was something primitive and frank and strong in the expressive face.

And so this handsome creature was Miss Tremaine's lover! Min was thrilled with the wonder of it. The locket suddenly became a sacred thing, and so personal as to make her gaze profane. Her fingers closed over it. The motive power of the request was now clear—*jealousy*, and quite natural. Would it not be torture to any woman of feeling to know that her lover's picture lay close to the heart of another?

Min removed the photograph from the locket. Otherwise, she felt that she could not wear the necklace.

The festivities that evening began in the dining room. The spice of autumn was in the air, and the clarion of laughter and joyous voices. Now and again came a fusillade of popping corks. The orchestra seemed possessed by a musical frenzy, and played sensuous strains that stirred the hot blood of the revelers.

Min, with her young beauty and her moonlight draperies, seemed a harmonious part of the gay scene. She and her mother left the dining-room together, but quickly became separated. They were an ill-matched pair—a common house fly and a Luna moth.

The girl's step was light and eager; excitement flushed her cheek and flashed from her eyes. She flitted from one decorated spot to another and finally brought up in the ballroom, vacant at this early evening hour. She tapped the floor impatiently with the toe of her silver slipper, and then, at the sound of approaching footsteps, twirled airily around and faced Paxton.

"I've been hunting all around for you," he said. "Your mother wants to see you. She's gone up for the night."

Min pouted.

"Oh, bother! I bet you she just wants to know what time I'll come to bed."

She moved reluctantly toward the door, but first sent Paxton an alluring glance over her shoulder. He escorted her up the stairs and through the empty upper corridors to her door, where she parted from him with a coy gesture. She entered the tiny suite in something of a flutter. It was lighted, but apparently untenanted. Frowning, she crossed the floor to the dressing room.

"Mother!" she called pettishly. "Mother!"

At that identical moment, she became conscious of another presence in the room. She turned quickly, and was amazed to discover Paxton within, and committing the unpardonable act of locking the door. Her eyes widened and displayed fiery lights.

"Well, if that isn't the limit!" she cried, her temper thoroughly aroused. "And I took you for a gentleman! You unlock that door and get right out of my room! Be quick, too!"

The man coolly slipped the key into his pocket and took a stand with his back against the door.

"Now, see here, my girl," he began in a conciliatory way.

There was a flash of silver-green across the room; then a vigorous hand flew out and dealt Paxton's cheek a stinging blow that left it scarlet.

"My girl!" Min panted in an access of rage. "My girl!"

Paxton caught the hand while it was in motion and gripped it more in the manner of a blacksmith than that of a lover.

"You little fury, stop this funny business right now!" he commanded angrily. "I meant to let you down easy, but you've taken the wrong tack. You're wanted for receiving stolen goods—and I've got you with the goods on—a hundred-thousand-dollar necklace! See?"

He thrust away her hand, stuffed both of his own into his pockets, and regarded her with eyes as unsentimental as a couple of shoe buttons.

Something within Min snapped and left her body without sensation. It was like the burning out of a fuse. Her face turned a queer putty color. Even her hair seemed to pale. She could not speak; she could not move. She could merely stand there, looking like the guilty creature she was not, and stare vacantly into those shoe-button eyes.

Suddenly she realized that Paxton was questioning her.

"Say, I know you're green at the business, but how did you happen to do such a fool thing as to send a description of the trunk's contents to *Our Girls' Home Journal*? The moment I lit on it, I knew I'd bagged my bird, all right."

Min's gray lips moved stiffly:

"Who—are—you?"

"Tom Kelly, one of Burns' men. This is my first big case."

At his answer, terror clutched her heart.

"A detective!" she gasped; and then, conscious of the shame he had put upon her, she hid her face in her trembling hands.

He became slightly apologetic.

"Beg pardon for making love to you, but it sure was the trick. It's all in the day's work of a detective; you know.

And, by George, you're such a beauty that if you weren't mixed up in this theft, I'd marry you, all right."

Her hands fell from her face, and quick anger sent the blood rushing to her head.

"Marry me! I'd like to see you! I'd rather keep a boarding house in Soho-ville all my life for goats than marry a low thing like you! Give me that key. I'm going to get my mother."

Paxton stuffed his hands deeper into his pockets.

"She's your mother, is she? The fat party in the white shirt waist? Looks like it, don't she? Acts like it, too! Queer, she can't remember what to call you. 'Minna' he whispered, in perfect imitation of her past promptings. "She don't like this jaunt one little bit, either. You've got her scared to death."

Min drooped before this parade of her unmasked follies. Though innocent in conception, each now became a strong, accusing factor in the league of evidence against her. The terrors of the law, and its injustice, began to grip her imagination; and when a knock came at the door, she started violently, and a cold moisture dampened her forehead.

"The owners come to claim the necklace," announced Paxton, and he opened the door to admit—the amber girl and her dinner companion!

Their advent was so unexpected to Min as to rob her of all sense of reality. She saw the three people and heard their voices as from a distance. Dully, she noticed that Mrs. Godwin-Godwin's face was very white beneath its light coat of tan, that it wore a haunted expression; and once she fancied that those hazel eyes were mutely questioning her. She knew the men were talking together, but what they said meant nothing to her, till a peremptory command came from Paxton to deliver the lost treasure to Mr. Godwin-Godwin.

Mechanically, she handed it to him; watched him adjust his monocle, and begin a careful examination of the medallions. The locket reached, he held it long in his fingers and scrutinized its jeweled face.

"You've traced the missing emerald, Kelly?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. It's in the safe."

He nodded approval, turned over the locket in his palm, and felt for the spring. There was a stir in the room. The amber girl darted suddenly to her husband's side. Her head was thrown back; her eyes lowered and fastened on the necklace; the corners of her sensitive mouth twitched as from a suppressed emotion; her breath came with difficulty, and, to Min, who was closely observing her, it seemed suspended altogether when Godwin-Godwin found the spring of the locket.

At his touch, it opened. The jeweled interior, of course, was empty.

Min was overpowered by the radiance of the glance that Mrs. Godwin-Godwin flashed at her. It was like a shaft of sunlight, warming and heartening; even reassuring, for some mystical reason, and full of gratitude.

Suddenly a wave of understanding swept over Min; it came in the way of a revelation and laid bare that other woman's soul. The picture she had removed from the locket was the picture of the former ranch girl's *lover*! It was she who had entered their bedroom that night to recover her lost treasure!

Min, taking quick advantage of the retirement of the two men to a distant corner, directed an eager, questioning glance toward the amber girl, who, in answer, framed with her lips the words:

"You have saved me from disgrace."

There was time for nothing more. The men had ceased talking, and had separated. Instinctively, Min knew she had been the subject of discussion.

The detective looked at her fixedly.

"How did you come by this necklace?"

"My mother keeps a boarding house in Sohoville. We had a boarder who owed us nearly two hundred dollars. She went off one day and didn't come back. We took her trunk to get square."

"Her name?"

"Hilda Tremaine."

"Did she have brown——" Mrs. Godwin-Godwin began eagerly.

Paxton raised a protesting hand.

"Beg pardon, but we'll let Miss Tuttle describe the party, if you please."

"She was tall and broad-shouldered," said Min, breathing quickly. "She was about my height. She had brown hair and blue eyes and lots of color. She would have been handsome if she hadn't had such a queer upper lip. It went down into a point in the middle. A gentleman friend of mine said she looked like an ant-eater."

"Exactly," said Godwin-Godwin, smiling.

"What nationality was the person?"

"English."

"My maid, Eliza Hobbs," said the amber girl quietly, inclining her head toward Min. "I was going away—on a little journey, and she deserted me at the station and stole my trunk."

For the second time within the hour, Min had the taste of dust in her mouth. This shock to her sensibilities left her dumb. Scenes with Miss Tremaine, otherwise Eliza Hobbs, passed before her eyes with the rapidity and vividness of moving pictures. Now she saw herself carrying a heavy breakfast tray to her star boarder's room; now assisting the supposed aristocrat with her toilet, putting dress shields into her waist, fastening her gown, sewing buttons on her boots, and—oh, the ignominy of it!—even polishing them.

She became crimson and hot, and lowered her eyes; she did everything, in



A wrathful outburst came from Ned. He promptly laid hands on the detective's shoulders, and carried him bodily from the room.

fact, to establish her guilt with her accusers.

"Your maid!" she stammered finally. "Your maid!"

"Now, up to this, you've told a very good story, Miss Tuttle," said Paxton blandly. "But it has yet to be proved."

Again fears began to circle around Min like so many foes, and the look of terror crept back to her face. She had made an implacable enemy of this man.

He would employ any means to make her out a criminal. She threw him a furtive glance. His shoe-button eyes were narrowed, and held an ugly expression.

In this moment of her stress, the amber girl deliberately crossed the room to her side and laid a hand on her arm.

"I believe that you have told us the absolute truth," she said in the clear soprano of the Western-girl.

"Aren't you a bit hasty?" asked her husband. "The girl shall be given an opportunity to prove her innocence. Suspend your judgment till then."

"Right you are!" approved Paxton. "She may be as harmless as a baby's finger nail, but I'm of the opinion *it's all acting*. Believe me, Mrs. Godwin-Godwin, it's a part of their trade. And from my experience, which is considerable, this girl, here, could match Jane Cowl at every point in 'Within the Law,' and go her one better each time. If she wasn't in collusion with said Eliza Hobbs, who I've discovered by aid of Scotland Yard to be a member of a gang of thieving servants, why, I ask, didn't she seize the trunk in the legal way of New Jersey, and get a sheriff's writ of attachment?"

The ground began to tremble under Min's feet. She clenched her right hand, and pressed it against her cheek. What was a "sheriff's writ of attachment"? To her, the phrase had no meaning.

She half raised her eyes, and stole a look at Paxton. The glance she encountered accused, convicted, and sentenced her in a flash. A pressure of that friendly hand on her arm gave her courage. She turned her back to the detective and faced Godwin-Godwin.

"Send for my mother," she said, with a slight return of spirit. "She'll tell you the truth, just as I have."

"The fat party whom you call your mother has gone to the station to meet the eight-six train," informed Paxton dryly. "She telegraphed this morning to Sohoville to a man named Holmes, and told him to come here at once. The train's a half hour or so late."

Amazement distorted Min's face. It went from white to scarlet. She looked wildly round the room. Escape was impossible. The detective blocked the path to the dressing-room door. She wrenched herself away from the amber girl's clasp and made a quick turn to

the window. She threw up the lower sash, not knowing in the least what she was doing. In a trice, the other girl was at her side.

From below, came the strains of that familiar dance music. Against the distant sky, huge Greylock showed, black-bodied and wearing a crown of moonlight. Astounding, but it was merely her tiny world that was out of gear.

"How dared my mother send for Ned Holmes?" gasped Min, addressing her companion quite as if that stranger were in complete understanding of the situation.

Scarcely had the name left her lips when the door opened to admit the man who bore it. He came into the room with a breeze, strode over to Min, and seized her by the shoulders. He gave her a slight shake.

"Come, brace up!" he said in his deeply vibrating tones. "You're all right. Don't look so scared. You ain't done anything illegal. Your mother's had a sheriff's writ with her all the time. Carried it round in that bead bag she always wears. I made her get it out before you left. Here," he said, turning to Paxton and tossing him the sealed document.

Had her lover accorded Min any other than this brusque, casual treatment, had she detected in his ringing voice a trace of pity or contempt or triumph, she would have hated him forevermore. As it was, her heart leaped at his reassuring words, and filled and overfilled with gratitude. It seemed to her that he had lifted her bodily from quicksand and placed her on firm ground. Unconsciously she drew very close to him, her fears blown away by his big voice.

For a moment there was silence in the room, broken only by the scratching of a pen. Mrs. Godwin-Godwin had withdrawn from the window, and had seated

herself at the bedroom desk, where she was writing a note with great speed.

Presently, "And who might you be?" demanded Paxton of the late comer.

"Just plain Ned Holmes, of Soho-ville, Noo Jersey; and it looks like I'd come just in time to settle this trunk business. Mrs. Tuttle and I have been listening to all you've said for some time, outside the door. Lord, but you're a Simple Simon, all right, to think that a girl would wear in public stolen jewelry and——"

"It wouldn't be the first time I'd been able to send a girl where she belonged, *behind the bars*, by playing on-her vanity," was Paxton's hot retort, which made Min's blood seethe.

"Speak in a lower voice, I beg you," admonished Godwin-Godwin, twisting his monocle somewhat nervously. "We've kept this out of the papers, so far, and I don't wish it to become public gossip."

"Well, we ain't got anything to hide," said Ned, with a good-humored smile.

Paxton glanced up from his examination of the sheriff's writ.

"Where is the so-called Mrs. Tuttle?" he asked sarcastically.

"Outside in the auto, crying. Poor woman! I sent her back there soon's I heard what the row was about. We're going to leave this place, and run over to Pittsfield for the night, as soon as things are settled."

"Why were you sent for?" pursued the detective, unwisely as it proved.

Ned crossed the room in two steps and faced Paxton. Min was thrilled to see how puny and insignificant a creature the detective looked beside her giant lover.

"The night they reached here, Mrs. Tuttle wrote to me that she was afraid my young lady had got in with low company, and I'd better come and look after her," Ned said, with slow, pointed emphasis.

Min gave a quick nod of approba-

tion, and the room tinkled with the amber girl's sudden laughter. Even Godwin-Godwin raised his monocle and stared at Holmes, with a gleam of amusement in his eye.

Paxton set his jaw, and looked ugly.

"Do you mean to accept the say-so of this fellow Holmes?" he asked his employer.

Godwin-Godwin winked off his monocle, and swung it by the cord back and forth, back and forth, and made no reply. His wife laid down her pen, hesitated a moment, then rose and walked swiftly over to him. She placed both hands pleadingly on his arm.

"Say 'yes,' Alfred," she urged him in a low voice. "The story hangs together perfectly. You can see that no wrong has been done or intended. The necklace has been returned, and you've recovered the emerald from the people to whom Eliza sold it. And I think it is cruel, cruel," she cried passionately, her topaz eyes ablaze, "to keep an innocent person on the rack like this."

The muscles of the man's lean jaw worked convulsively. He inclined his head, and gazed into those alluring eyes. He sighed, and his features relaxed their sternness.

"We'll dismiss the case, Kelly," he said quietly.

Ned threw open the door.

"Then, if you don't mind, us men will light right out and let Miss Tuttle pack up and hustle down to her mother in the auto. We want to make Pittsfield by ten o'clock, anyway."

"How's the young person going to manage it?" asked Paxton in scathing accents. "A second Lady Godiva? What about the contents of the trunk?"

The reference was meaningless alike to Min and her lover, but the intended insult was clear. A wrathful outburst came from Ned. He promptly laid powerful hands on the detective's

shoulders, lifted him from the floor, and carried him bodily from the room.

Crimson rings appeared on Min's white cheeks. She clapped her hands exultantly and rose to her toes with a little springing motion. But the next instant she settled herself back again on her silver heels, for Godwin-Godwin was taking regal leave of her.

With a crude assumption of dignity, she acknowledged his slight bow; then she threw back her head defiantly and awaited a second royal snub. Instead, she was taken into a warm embrace, a cool, fragrant cheek was pressed close to her burning face, and she heard the amber girl's whisper in her ear.

"Good-by for a little," murmured the musical voice. "A note on the desk will tell you what I wish you to do with the trunk."

And then the door closed on the Godwin-Godwins.

For many seconds thereafter, there was not the slightest muscular movement of Min's body. Presently she drew a sigh that seemed to come from the depths of her soul, and opened the note of instruction. It read:

MY DEAR FRIEND: One day soon I will see you and tell you my story. Until then it is enough to say that I am forever in your debt.

As a tiny part of my obligations, will you accept the contents of my trunk for a trousseau?

That you will marry the splendid giant with the big voice and the big smile and the honest eyes is the devout prayer of your faithful friend,

CYNTHIA GODWIN-GODWIN.

Destroy the picture, already too long treasured. It may help me to forget.

C. G. G.

American Women Physicians

THE *Medical Review of Reviews* recently published a woman's number, dedicated to the women physicians of America, "as a tribute to their earnestness, enthusiasm, modesty, energy, perseverance, and scientific acumen."

The editor states that the first real opportunity for the expansion of feminine activities was in the medical profession, and that the medical women of the country have reflected credit upon themselves and their chosen profession. Great advances have been made in medicine since the days of the pioneers.

At present there is no lack of opportunity for medical education. In 1909 there were ninety-one coeducational and three distinctively women's medical colleges, with over nine hundred students in attendance. The great need now is equality of hospital training, which is absolutely demanded by modern professional life. Recently, after long discussion, two women internes were admitted to Bellevue Hospital. This, no doubt, is an entering wedge. An increased number of internships open to women in large hospitals must soon be obtained.

The editor further gives a long list of American women who have achieved distinction in medicine, surgery, obstetrics, pathology, industrial and social diseases, eugenics, and child welfare, and ends with the words:

"It is astonishing that in spite of the lack of hospital training, the majority of women physicians have achieved such notable success. The women in medicine should be recognized in every way possible.

"Their work in connection with the public health is assuming magnificent proportions, and merits the approbation and support of the entire profession, which should no more recognize sex differences than do the diseases it aims to combat."

The articles in this number are all written by women physicians who have done some important work.

Suggestions to Mere Man

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

SIR WILLIAM OSLER, while professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, always advised members of the graduating classes to marry as soon as possible; he considered this advice to young men just entering an arduous profession sound and highly important. Other distinguished men in other paths of life have offered this same advice. Nevertheless, the disinclination of both sexes to entering the state of marital felicity has assumed tremendous proportions of recent years, and bachelor maids and men abound everywhere. Wise men and women shake their heads sadly at the existent social conditions which have created so unnatural and complex a civilization as that of ours of to-day; for there can be no doubt that the storm and stress of modern life leave little time for the cultivation of domesticity.

Perhaps a more simple and more orderly state of affairs will result from the present great war of the nations. There are those who hope we will go back to the simple tastes and habits of our forbears, but the world never goes back; we must look hopefully and optimistically forward, believing that the general atmosphere will be purified and

that, with a clearer vision, we will see the duty we owe to ourselves, to one another, and to the community. This is a great privilege—to see the duty we owe ourselves.

The wise Osler knew that unless a man is anchored with the sweet chains that nature forges for him, he is apt to go very far afield, very far indeed.

While this is not a dissertation on the benefits and advantages to be derived from matrimony, it is a plea that men in general take a graver account of themselves and by so doing cease the mad pursuit of such matters, be they commercial, social, physical, or what not, as make old men of them at forty or thereabouts.

We hear a good deal about testing "blood pressure" these days; it means the determination, by means of a little machine, of the amount of resistance an artery is capable of exerting against the blood stream, and it is a new method recently introduced into medicine for diagnosing the condition of the arterial system—the heart and blood vessels. That disturbances of this system are markedly on the increase is well known, and it is not to be wondered at, because that wonderful organ, the heart, with its tributaries,

not only conveys the body's nourishment in the form of blood to the remotest parts of the system, but is itself nourished by the same blood, and is more directly affected by impurities and poisons in the blood stream than is perhaps any other tissue in the body.

Then, the heart is directly under the influence of the central nervous system, of the sympathetic nerves, and of nervous influences of its own. There is no more fascinating study in the whole range of medical science than this, and a vast amount of attention is being paid to it now. What causes the heart to beat, for instance? We know that everything affects it; every emotion, and every act—even so slight a thing as hurrying our steps—puts an additional speed on the entire machinery.

Until recent years it was generally supposed that the heartbeat was entirely dependent upon the nerves that came to it from the brain and the sympathetic system, but we now know that the heart can continue to beat indefinitely outside of the body when it is kept in a saline solution that contains oxygen. So the heart possesses a motor power of its own, beside the supply it receives from outside. How this is effected is not yet entirely clear; but one thing is certain—the little bean-shaped glands called the adrenals play an important rôle in this, as they do in other processes of the body, for they supply a substance which, in the lungs, takes oxygen from the air. This enables the heart to perform its extraordinary work unceasingly, unflinchingly, so long as it is not interfered with; for this secretion also has a great influence upon *blood pressure*, of which we hear so much nowadays. Its main function is to destroy toxic properties in the blood. Experiments on animals show that when these little glands are removed, a state of auto-intoxication is rapidly set up, a poison resembling curare is gen-

erated in the system, and extreme muscular fatigue and death follow. A well-known fiction writer has recently used this fact as the basis for a sensational detective story.

Now the activity of these astonishing little organs is reduced by infectious diseases, by poisons such as arsenic, mercury, and phosphorus, and by intoxicants such as alcohol and nicotine. They defend the body, especially the circulatory system, so long as they can, from the diseased conditions which these agents set up, and in doing this they are, of course, often overworked. They become enfeebled and no longer contribute the amount of secretion necessary to protect these structures; and heart disease, arteriosclerosis, and similar conditions arise.

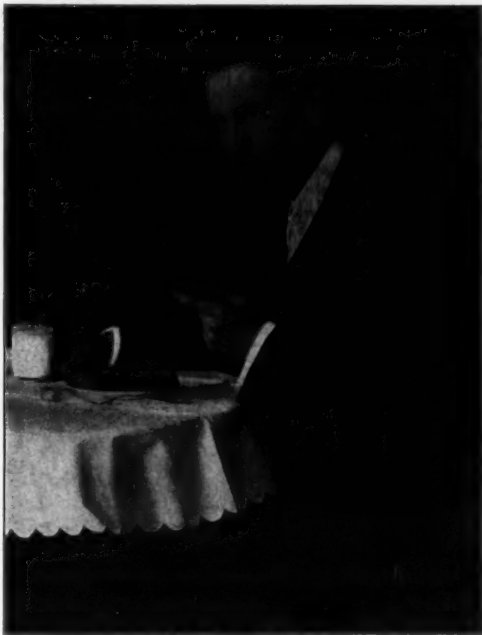
It is said that *a man is as old as his arteries*. Hardening of the arteries is perhaps a natural process in the course of old age, although it can be prevented by living a very simple life. It is a condition that seems to be very common in comparatively young men of to-day; it is said to be quite frequent at thirty-five in city-bred men. This is appalling when one remembers that hardened arteries are caused by avoidable diseases and avoidable tastes or appetites. An excessive amount of adrenalin, produced by these little glands, causes contraction of the arteries; this raises the blood pressure, and in time results in a thickening of the artery walls.

Now all the agents that bring about this condition of these little glands are also known to produce arteriosclerosis. Besides alcohol, nicotine, and so forth, a heavy, rich diet, including much meat, is also condemned from this standpoint. It is true that some men do attain a ripe old age notwithstanding all sorts of excesses, but they are the exceptions, and one cannot but wonder what their attainments would have been under abstemiousness.

The deleterious action of large amounts of alcohol on the nervous system, as well as on the heart and arteries, is too well known to need any comment here, but what is of exceeding interest in connection with it is that the unnatural desire for strong drink is now believed to be due to inactivity of the ductless glands; and just as the immoderate use of stimulants destroys the usefulness of these remarkable organs, so the craving for it is thought to be a lack of the elements that they contribute.

Statistics show that men who marry quite young do not develop the taste for alcohol that unmarried men or men who marry late in life do; and this is another argument in favor of early marriage. This proves the theory, too, that many old people feel better for their daily portion of liquor, because in them the ductless glands have degenerated. It also explains the interesting fact that many women who while in the prime of life cannot indulge in strong drink find themselves cultivating a taste for it during their declining years.

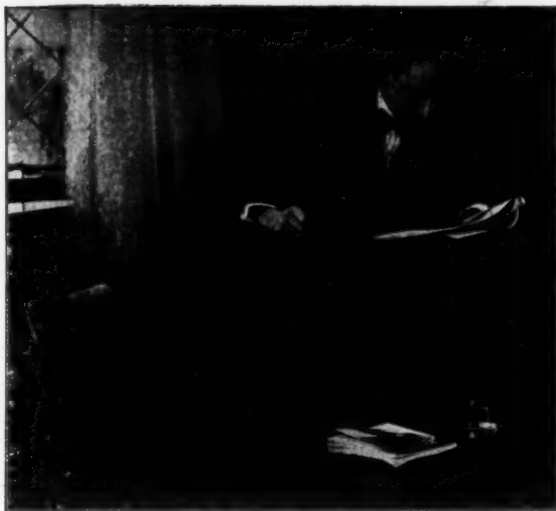
While it is an unquestionable truth that alcohol has a most deleterious effect upon the brain and heart, and that chronic alcoholics are short-lived and fall easy victims to pneumonia, apoplexy, and so forth, it is also true that alcohol is of decided benefit to mankind when properly employed. Beer made of pure malt and hops contains little alcohol, and, owing to its bitter constituents, aids digestion, but when taken in large quantities daily, it has a very harmful effect upon the kidneys and the arterial system, besides in-



The bachelor's thoughts give him pause.

creasing fat and bulk to a distressing extent. Doubtless the least harmful and most beneficial of alcoholic drinks is light wine, which may be regarded as a harmless tonic when taken in small doses.

The old-fashioned preparations of "bitters" that have been obsolete for many years are again being suggested as useful in place of alcoholic beverages, to overcome the taste for strong drink, or to combat the conditions to which intoxicants give rise. These bitters are recommended for a variety of disorders, including stomach affections, such as indigestion and dyspepsia, malaria, liver and kidney complaints, and constipation. They are also recommended as tonics in enfeebled conditions and as alteratives in diseased states of the blood. One of the simplest consists of the following:



The benedict is at peace with all the world.

Gentian	4 ounces
Cinchona	2 ounces
Roman camomile	1 ounce
Quassia	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce
Bitter-orange peel	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce
Diluted alcohol	1 gallon

Mix the drugs, reduce to a coarse powder, mix with the diluted alcohol, macerate for seven days, agitating occasionally, then express and filter. The dose is from a tablespoonful to a wine-glassful three times a day.

It is a fortunate thing that tastes or appetites that cause degeneration of the glandular system rarely exist in any great variety in the same person. Thus inveterate smokers are rarely heavy drinkers; when this combination exists, it shortens life perceptibly. It has been proven experimentally that nicotine has a more pernicious effect upon the adrenals than alcohol. Many people insist that nicotine is not absorbed into the system through smoking; this is a great mistake. Cigarettes are most harmful, especially the practice of inhaling. Parents are extremely neglectful in allow-

ing growing boys to cultivate a taste for them. The nervous system is markedly affected; the eyes are injured; but above all the heart and stomach. The tobacco heart is well known, and when this condition is allowed to persist, the arteries become hardened. In fact, many authorities are agreed that nicotine is one of the chief factors in the development of arteriosclerosis. An English authority declares that it raises blood pressure enormously, and that he has ob-

served the condition of diseased arteries with great frequency in inveterate smokers. Therefore, smoking, by producing arterial changes, must shorten life; not invariably so, of course, as there are many cases of old people—men and women—on record who all their lives have smoked or used snuff.

It is a regrettable fact that the custom of smoking is increasing among women. An illuminating truth connected with this is that the practice obtains almost wholly among women of leisure or those following such employment as does not absorb the mind to any great extent. The writer, for instance, does not know a single woman physician addicted to the weed, but many artists and theatrical people, and is often astounded in what out-of-the-way places she stumbles upon this indulgence. Like tipping, it is often pursued in secret and in silence by drab little spinsters who think they are thus defying God and the devil. Those whose days are uneventful and monotonous, and who have no serious mental

occupations, can scarcely be blamed for seeking solace and enjoyment in such diversions. Their mistake lies farther back, in not having formed congenial companionships and in not leading more wholesome and natural lives.

That mental occupation is one's salvation has often been forcibly illustrated by the rapid decline of men who have retired from business. But too much business, with its attendant cares and worries and the exclusion of all rest and relaxation—which is the rule and not the exception very often—has a most pernicious influence upon the health and appearance. Men who are thus absorbed in business frequently look ten or twenty years older than they really are; they live and die for business, and wherefore? The mental stress under which they labor day in and day out has a peculiarly deleterious effect upon the pituitary gland, a body in the brain which is the governing center of the ductless glands. This extraordinary little gland also acts powerfully in raising blood pressure, and accounts for the tremendous effect that business worries have upon the heart and arteries, and for the frequency of heart failure, apoplexy, and similar conditions among our men, who practically devote their wonderful powers exclusively to the mad pursuit of money-getting.

It is generally supposed that because commercialism is cold, heartless, and unsympathetic, business men are possessed of very little feeling. As a matter of fact, they run the whole gamut of the emotions, and this acts powerfully upon the pituitary gland, the central organ upon which all severe emotions react. Thus emotions produce higher blood pressure, with its attendant disturbances of the circulatory system. The wear and tear of an arduous life must leave its imprint upon the body externally as well; and so we see every evidence of premature old

age, as well as actual senility, in scores of men who should be young at sixty, but who are old by the time they reach the half-century mark.

Mental depression should be guarded against, and an optimistic, even a humorous, aspect of life cultivated. A story is told of an old boatman of eighty, who, still as lively with the oars as his grandson, on being asked the reason for his unabated vigor, answered: "Always merry!" "The smile that won't come off" has paved the way to fame and fortune in many instances; but of more importance and of more lasting benefit are the health and beauty that a wholesome optimism engenders and radiates.

Now the optimistic person rarely finds any difficulty in wooing Somnus, the little god of sleep, because pleasurable emotions have a salubrious effect upon the ductless glands that control sleep. By this means, an anæmic condition of the brain is induced, which regulates this function. Mental labor of any kind is apt to produce a wakeful night, or, at any rate, disturbed sleep. Children who are allowed to study or to read exciting stories in bed thus acquire, beside this injurious habit, a state of flushed brain and mental unrest that is exceedingly harmful and may lead to insomnia.

Sleep is one of the most important functions of the body, because during this process toxic properties are eliminated. In children, growth takes place during sleep; in adults, repair and accumulation of energy. Late hours habitually indulged in, late suppers that keep the digestive organs active when they should be quiescent, wines and other intoxicants that flush the brain—these and other practices that prevent healthy, natural sleep all tend to bring about marked deterioration of the physical forces and the general appearance. Sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, pasty complexion, sagging muscles, are only out-

ward indications of internal degeneration.

Continued sleeplessness destroys youthfulness and long life by retaining toxic products in the blood. The best way to insure sleep is, of course, to abstain from all those things that drive it away. One's sleeping room should be dark and well ventilated; a tranquil mind and a comparatively empty stomach are essential. Sometimes a very hot bath, by eliminating poisonous matter through the pores and soothing the nerves, insures sleep. When obstinate insomnia exists, a physician should be consulted, as the employment of sleeping drafts by a layman is highly dangerous.

The amount of sleep necessary varies with the individual. Some very active business men feel refreshed after five hours of peaceful slumber. No amount of sleep is productive in the revival of youthful characteristics if it is not refreshing; thus prolonged sleep may be harmful. In this respect, too, the married state is helpful, for "attached" men

are steadier in their habits and keep earlier hours than bachelors. Then, too, the whole trend of a married man's life, by virtue of the interest and care infused into it, is healthier and, if not longer lived, happier.

It must not be supposed from the foregoing remarks that alcohol and tobacco are condemned *in toto*. Nothing that beneficent nature gives us can be altogether bad; it is the use we make of it that puts the seal of approval or disapproval upon it. We must remember, also, that no two people are constituted precisely alike, and what is one man's meat is another man's poison. To live moderately, in accordance with the laws of hygiene, will insure a man freedom from the ills referred to; will, instead of degenerating the marvelous ductless glands, assist them in regulating the mechanism of the body so that we may not only reach fullness of years, but face the decline of life in complete mastery of self.

NOTE: Doctor Whitney will gladly answer any questions on this article.

Answers to Queries

MATILDA.—Faded auburn hair is the most difficult of all shades to treat. I do not advise henna, although many persons use it. When applied by professionals, the results are usually satisfactory, but the practice must be kept up. Directions for making henna paste will be sent to you if you wish it. Meanwhile, try this wash:

Sulphate of iron 1 dram
Claret 6 ounces

Crush and dissolve the iron in the wine, strain, and apply the lotion to the hair by means of a short-bristled brush. Be careful not to stain anything else but your hair with the solution. Should you be so unfortunate, apply the juice of lemon.

J. F.—Habitual hoarseness may be due to some trouble of the vocal cords that requires the care of a throat specialist. It may be

the expression of a run-down system, for which rest and a good general tonic are all that is needed. The following mixture is often beneficial in this condition:

White of egg.
Juice of lemon.
Powdered sugar.

Beat the egg and sugar into a creamy mass; add the lemon drop by drop. Allow a teaspoonful of the mixture to remain in the mouth, and slowly trickle down the throat. Use as often as necessary. Pure pineapple juice is also an excellent remedy for throat troubles.

ANN MAUDE.—No lotion will correct defective vision. An eye specialist no doubt can prescribe lenses that will benefit you greatly. It will give me pleasure to send the formula for a famous eye wash on receipt of a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

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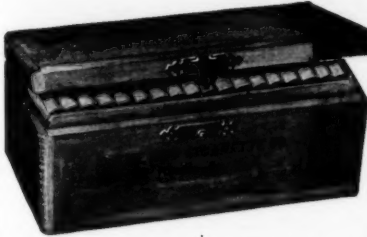
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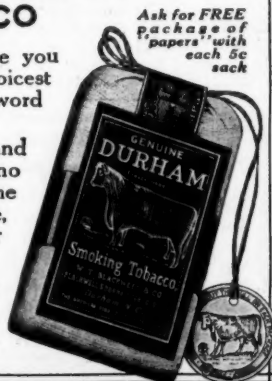
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